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Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Discusses Israeli 'Violations' With Envoys

JN1402142896 Gaza Palestine Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat today received the ambassadors of Finland, Austria, and Portugal. During the meeting, the president and the ambassadors reviewed the latest developments in the peace process and the Israeli violations of the agreements by closing the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and besieging Palestinian cities.

The talks also addressed Palestinian ties with these countries, ways of enhancing them, and supporting the Palestinian economy.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Denies Report on Speech

TA1502121396 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 15 Feb 96 p 11

[Report by 'Ada Kohen, Menahem Rahat, and Shefi Gabay]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Last night, 'Arutz 7 broadcast a report according to which Yasir 'Arafat met Arab diplomats in Stockholm and made a speech entitled "Israel's Imminent Total Collapse." [passage omitted]

MA'ARIV relayed the report to 'Arafat's office in Gaza, where it was translated into Arabic and presented to the chairman. In reaction, 'Arafat said that the report is incorrect and inaccurate.

He confirmed that he met with the ambassadors but, according to him, the ambassadors initiated the meeting to congratulate him on his courage in making peace with Israel and for his victory in the elections.

Members of 'Arafat's entourage to Stockholm said that the report is a lie made up by extremist Israeli rightists who wish to confuse the Israeli public.

Palestinian Affairs: PNC Weighs Postponing Charter Change to After Election

TA1402194096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] PLO sources say that the amendment of the Palestinian Charter may be put off until after the Israeli elections. Salim Za'nun, chairman of the Palestine National Council [PNC], said that Israel will be busy with its internal affairs.

Earlier, U.S. Senator Daniel Inouye said his impression was that Yasir 'Arafat is not determined to amend the charter on time.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Seeks Israeli Concessions for Charter Change

TA1502115996 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 15 Feb 96 p A5

[Report by Ori Nir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Marwan al-Barghuthi, Fatah secretary general in the West Bank, yesterday launched an initiative to create a linkage between the release of Palestinian security prisoners held in Israel and the amendment of the Palestinian Charter.

Al-Barghuthi, who was elected member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, sent letters to Palestinian Authority President Yasir 'Arafat and to Salim Za'nun, acting chairman of the Palestinian National Council [PNC], demanding that selected Palestinian prisoners from among those held in Israeli jails be nominated PNC members. He explained that this will create an Israeli interest to release them and improve the chances of amending the charter.

The PNC Presidium set the quota for the residents of the territories at 184 members, of which 88 have already been named since it has been decided that all elected members of the legislative council will automatically be PNC members. Al-Barghuthi suggests that a significant number of the remaining 96 be security prisoners. According to al-Barghuthi, all security prisoners and all those serving long terms should be made PNC members.

"We believe that in this way we will be able to score achievements for the PNC session while breaking through the refusal to release the prisoners," he said, adding that the Palestinians should present this to Israel as a fait accompli. He added that the Fatah leadership in the territories has drafted the list of prisoners it suggests be made PNC members. Israel has a clear interest in convening the PNC, "mainly after the Israeli prime minister has set a final Israeli election date."

Al-Barghuthi's initiative reflects a tendency among members of the elected PA Council to use the PNC convention and the charter amendment as a lever with which to pressure Israel to make further concessions. This tendency is supported by the vast majority of residents of the territories (as public opinion polls indicated).

Yesterday, Za'nun welcomed al-Barghuthi's initiative, saying that the Palestinian prisoners are "the most deserving persons to be part of our new political life." [passage omitted]

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 15 February carries a report by Amir Gilat on page 22 adding that "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres promised that Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin will be released from prison following the amendment of the Palestinian Charter. This was stated last night by Knesset Member 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah after his meeting with the prime minister." Darawshah further said that Peres told him "he will also be willing to release the women prisoners."]

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's al-Ghusayn Rejects Calls to Revoke Charter

MM1502120096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Jihan al-Husayni: "Juwayd al-Ghusayn Tells AL-HAYAH: Palestinian Charter Irrevocable....It Is History!"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — Juwayd al-Ghusayn, member of the PLO Executive Committee and chairman of the Palestine National Fund, has stressed that the PLO Charter does not contain a clause concerning the destruction of the State of Israel. He said: "The charter calls for establishing a democratic state in Palestine, and it rejects the Israeli occupation. The [Palestine] National Council [PNC] overwhelmingly decided on 24 November 1988 to recognize the State of Israel alongside a Palestinian state. This decision is an alternative to what is mentioned in the charter about the establishment of a democratic state on all Palestinian territory in which Jews and Arabs live side by side with equal rights and duties. It also replaces the clause whose abolition is sought."

In a statement to AL-HAYAH al-Ghusayn stressed that "the charter is irrevocable...it is an era that existed, so how can we abolish it? Some developments took place in a later stage, prompting some amendments. We are conducting these developments in the peace negotiations with the Israelis, and a Palestinian state will be established soon. Israel is recognized at the Palestinian level. So I see no need to revoke the charter. We can document these new concepts in another resolution. But the Israelis want to trample on and humiliate us."

On Israel's position and its effect on the peace process, al-Ghusayn said that "politicians always demand the maximum to ensure that they obtain their demands...but they (the Israelis) need the peace more than us. They are aware that it is in their interests. Even to this day southern Lebanon continues to give them sleepless nights with the fedayeen operations threatening their security. Besides, it is difficult for Israel to live isolated among the Arab states."

On the possibility of convening the PNC he pointed out that "it was decided at the PLO Executive Committee's recent meeting to form a committee to discuss the issue at its next meeting in Gaza after 'Id al-Fitr to set a date for a PNC session on Palestinian territory."

On preparations for the final negotiations, he said: "We have assigned cadres of Palestinian specialists to collate all the issues in 44 dossiers and to prepare better for these negotiations. We have fine scientists and capabilities. I strongly support the idea of brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas] taking charge of the final negotiations files. I have another idea, namely that the expertise of Egyptian scientists and legal experts should be sought."

On the existence of unofficial talks between the Palestinians and Israelis in Brussels or elsewhere, he said: "I have read about unofficial talks concerning Jerusalem, but the Israelis deny them and we make no mention of them. I do not know the truth. However, I am in favor of not announcing any talks until they reach fruition, especially as there are extremists in Israel and there are Palestinian oppositionists. Secrecy helped the Oslo negotiations to succeed."

Asked about the failure of PLO Political Department Head Faruq Qaddumi to attend the recent Executive Committee meetings, held in al-'Arish last week, he said: "These are differences in the Fatah house. I disagree with those who refuse to go to Gaza while a single Israeli soldier is present on the homeland's territory. What do they mean? Are we happy with this presence? There is an agreement which we have accepted, it is the only thing available now, and the future is ours."

Al-Ghusayn pointed out that the Executive Committee has appointed a committee to make contacts with the seven factions [opposed to the peace process] to maintain the dialogue. He said: "By the way, these factions represent nothing on the Palestinian scene, as the election results attest."

Palestinian Affairs: Official Denies Plans To Postpone Final Status Talks

JN1402150296 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 14 Feb 96 pp 1, 17

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Zuhdi al-Nashashibi, finance minister in the Palestinian National Authority, denied there are plans to postpone the final status negotiations between Israel and the PLO, scheduled to take place in

May, in the wake of the decision of the Israeli prime minister to hold early elections.

AL-Nashashibi told AL-ASWAQ the early elections in Israel have nothing to do with the commitments the Israeli Government must fulfill in accordance with the specific timetables agreed on in the second Oslo accord. He said the redeployment in Hebron must take place in March, as scheduled. The same goes for redeployment in Zone C.

Al-Nashashibi cited a statement by the Israeli prime minister in which Peres says holding early elections would not affect the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Sources—Palestinian Council To Convene 26 Feb

TA1402145896 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] Ramallah, AL-BILAD — Informed Palestinian sources claim that within the next few days, invitations will be issued to attend the first Palestinian Legislative Council [PC] session on 26 February, after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

The sources say that the invitations to the session will be sent this week, after the Central Elections Commission officially announced the names of the PC members.

According to the Palestinian Election Law, the first meeting of the PC on 26 February will be chaired by Haydar 'Abd-al-Shafi because he is the most senior member of the PC.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Abbas Says PLF To Attend PNC Session

TA1402150596 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-BILAD — Muhammad 'Abbas, secretary general of the Palestine Liberation Front [PLF], has announced that the PLF general secretariat has decided to attend the Palestine National Council [PNC] session that will be convened on Palestinian soil.

He said that the decision by the PLF general secretariat to attend the PNC session, which will be held on Palestinian soil, stems from the PLF's firm stance on preserving the unity of the Palestinian ranks, regardless of the nature of the political positions, and the unity of the Palestinian people's institutions, above all the PNC, which is the Palestinian people's principal institution.

Palestinian Affairs: Habash Wants To Attend PNC Session in Territories

TA1502104296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] George Habash, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine terror organization, wants to enter the territories to participate in the Palestine National Council [PNC] session. Sources in the Palestinian Authority told our correspondent that the PNC's secretariat in Amman yesterday relayed to 'Arafat's office a list of 25 PNC members who want to attend the session in the territories. The list includes the names of George Habash and his deputy, Abu-'Ali Mustafa [Mustafa al-Zibri]. The list will be submitted for Israel's approval in the near future.

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th—Differences Over Gaza Airport Settled

JN1402182096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 14 Feb 96

[From the "Today's Events" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] Ladies and gentlemen: Various media have shown interest in the differences which recently erupted between the Palestinian and Israeli sides over the building of Gaza airport.

In a statement to our program, Dr. Nabil Sha'th, member of the Legislative Council, says that these differences have been settled. He said:

[Begin Sha'th recording] The difficult negotiations we held with the Israeli side over the Palestinian international airport in Rafah have actually ended. Israel had been demanding a halt to work on this airport until an agreement was reached on all measures in this regard.

In the recent negotiations, however, it was agreed to continue work on the airport at full strength so the runway can be built in May. Consequently, it will be possible for the Palestinian airspace to receive aircraft carrying passengers and cargo to and from Palestine via our airport. This will coincide with a visit by Netherlands Development Cooperation Minister Jan Pronk, whom we met in the Netherlands 10 days ago. He will confirm the Netherlands donation that will cover 80 percent of the cost of two aircraft for the first Palestinian airline, which will use this airport to carry passengers and cargo to and from Palestine.

Meanwhile, the Netherlands prime minister and Brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] inaugurated work to build a Palestinian port in Gaza. Both the port and airport projects are the lungs through which the

Palestinian economy can breathe and reach the international market in the coming phase. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Discusses Airport Plan With IATA Official

JN1502085996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received at the presidency the secretary general of the International Air Transport Association [IATA] and his delegation. Brigadier General Fayiz Zaydan, member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and former director of the Palestinian Civil Aviation Authority, attended the meeting. Talks dealt with the establishment of the Palestinian airline and obstacles placed by Israel on the road to establishing the Palestinian airport at Rafah .

Brig. Gen. Zaydan yesterday held talks with the IATA delegation on scopes of cooperation and possible IATA assistance. He also briefed the delegation on the progress of implementing the Rafah airport project.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Meets European Delegation in Gaza

JN1402210996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat received a European Troika delegation headed by Italian Foreign Affairs Minister Susanna Agnelli at the Presidency Office in Gaza this evening.

After the meeting, President 'Arafat asserted that the Palestinian losses caused by the military siege of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip total $6 million a day. He indicated that 250 days of closure were registered in the past six months [sentence as heard]. He pointed out that the losses sustained by the Palestinians due to the siege are greater than the aid offered to the National Authority by donor nations.

The president described his meeting with the Troika delegation as constructive and useful. President 'Arafat added: We will not forget that European aid has enabled us to hold presidential and legislative elections.

For her part, the Italian foreign minister, who is the head of the Troika delegation, congratulated President 'Arafat on his presidential election win. She asserted that the EU will continue to support the National Authority.

Agnelli added that her talks with President 'Arafat focused on the peace process and the implementation of Palestinian-Israeli agreements. She hoped that the Israeli authorities will soon lift the siege of the territories. She noted that she listened to President 'Arafat's assessment of the Syrian-Israeli talks.

In a separate development, under the patronage of President Yasir 'Arafat, the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs held a religious ceremony to honor clergymen, memorizers of the Holy Koran, and graduates of a course on Koranic recitation at the al-Shawwa Cultural Center in Gaza after an iftar banquet hosted at the center.

Shaykh Hasan Tahbub, minister of awqaf and religious affairs, hoped that such future ceremonies will soon be held in Jerusalem, the capital of a future Palestinian state.

For his part, Shaykh Yusuf Salamah, assistant under secretary of the Ministry of Awqaf, announced that student Wajih al-Shaykh 'Id, who represented Palestine at the international Koranic recitation contest held in Cairo, was the best contestant at the Gaza ceremony. President 'Arafat distributed certificates and prizes among graduates and clergymen.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Expels Committee Member for Opposing Election Stand

TA1402153196 Ramallah AL-BILAD in Arabic 13 Feb 96 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-BILAD — Leading sources in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] in Amman have said that the PFLP leadership in Damascus recently decided to expel PFLP Central Committee member Fawz Khalifah, alias Abu-Jabir, from the committee. The sources said that Abu-Jabir was expelled because he opposed the PFLP's decision not to participate in the elections.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Talks on Displaced Palestinians Progress

NC1402175596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1540 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Feb (MENA)—The four-way Egyptian, Jordanian, Palestinian, Israeli committee discussing the issue of displaced Palestinians ended its meetings at the Foreign Ministry today.

Ambassador Badr Hammam, assistant foreign minister for Arab affairs and head of Egypt's delegation to the meetings, said tangible progress was made during this seventh round of committee meetings. What has been achieved, he said, brings the committee closer to its basic objective; namely, the return of the displaced to their homes.

Asked if the committee discussed the number of displaced persons and the need to absorb them economically, Hammam said: "Naturally, people should return to places where there are means of living and survival; we cannot put thousands of people in a place that can take only hundreds."

He said the displaced Palestinians are those who left their land and homes because of the [1967] war. He said the problem of identifying them will be solved when the committee finally determines the sources that will be adopted for [providing statistics on] the displaced. There are efforts to determine these sources, he said.

In a speech at the end of the meetings, Ambassador Hammam stressed that the committee made an important step and that a spirit of friendship and cooperation characterized the meetings. He said that all parties are interested in reaching an agreement on this issue.

He said the eighth round of talks will be held in Bethlehem on 21 March.

Ambassador Yosi Hadas [name as received], head of the Israeli delegation, expressed thanks and appreciation for Egypt and President Husni Mubarak. He said the talks were cordial and stressed that all sides are willing to reach a solution and not to place obstacles in the way of peace. He said the committee found practical ways for a solution acceptable to all sides.

For his part, Jordanian Ambassador Muhammad Amin al-Shahankiri said the Cairo meeting was extremely important and discussed sensitive and hot issues.

He said his country is enthusiastically looking forward to the next meeting in Bethlehem, hoping that more progress will be made there.

Palestinian delegation head Zuhdi al-Sa'id said the Palestinians feel that a solution to the problem of the displaced has dragged on for too long. He hoped an agreement would be reached before the start of the final-status negotiations between the Palestinians and the Israelis in May.

Asked what exactly this round of talks achieved, al-Sa'id said the quadrilateral committee should have sped up practical arrangements for the return of the displaced.

He noted that lengthy discussions over theoretical issues were held in the previous rounds of talks. He said: The number of displaced is available from agreed-upon sources at the UN Relief and Works Agency and the Red Cross, so there should be no problem with unified statistical data.

He said a definition of the displaced will solve the problem of statistics and the adoption of the statistical data will solve the problem of definition. All those displaced since 1967; that is, all those registered in the West Bank and Gaza up to 4 June 1967, have the right to return, he said. He explained that this is stated in Article 3 of the elections appendix of the Oslo agreement.

Ambassador Yosi Hadas, head of the Israeli delegation, said several sources will be adopted to determine the number of those displaced in 1967. He said his country does not accept the return of those who left before 1967.

He said the four delegations will review the lists they will receive from various sources. The lists that are not agreed upon will be subject to negotiations, he said.

He said each delegation will present its lists from its sources. He said the Red Cross and any other source will be asked to offer lists.

He stressed that no reasonable source will be ignored. He hoped that a solution to this problem would be found so that stability and peace will be achieved in the region.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Israel Denies Accord To Return 4,000 Refugees Yearly

TA1402152996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli sources have said that no agreement on any matter of principle has been reached yet in the Cairo talks on the Palestinian refugees. It was agreed that at the next meeting, each side will present the sources on which it bases its definition of displaced persons and a decision will be made on their relevance. The Israeli sources told our Arab affairs correspondent Arye Gus that the report that Israel has agreed to the return of 4,000 displaced persons per year is totally unfounded.

Arab-Israeli Talks: Syrian Aide—Israel 'Putting Cart Before Horse'

MM1402141496 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Salwa al-Ustuwani: "Damascus Holds Israel Responsible for Obstructing Negotiations by its Insistence on Putting 'Cart Before Horse'"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Damascus, Jerusalem — [passage omitted] Damascus has said that Israel, with its current proposals, is still putting "the cart before the horse" by insisting on normalization and other ideas and plans. A Syrian official said yesterday that Israeli officials continue to propose ideas such as partial withdrawal, an Israeli referendum on the Golan, and raising the level of the talks — proposals which Syria has rejected. The Syrian official said that the Israeli proposals are designed to send the peace process back to square one. The official pointed out that the next round of Maryland negotiations on 28 February will be another test of Israeli intentions and U.S. credibility, especially as the United States has pledged to effectively play the role of a full partner. [passage omitted]

A Syrian official yesterday criticized statements made by Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq in which he announced his country's total refusal to discuss the issue of withdrawing to the 4 June 1967 lines. He said that Baraq's statements reflect the current Israeli orientation and that statements made by Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu indicate that he does not want peace with the Arabs, but, rather, to continue to aggravate conditions and implicate Western states, first and foremost the United States, in hostility toward the Arabs, namely by getting Washington to abandon its peace initiative and to continue its blind and total bias toward Israel's expansionist schemes.

Algeria

Algeria: GIA Threatens Oil Workers, Bans Travel by Youths

MM1402133596 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 14 Feb 96 pp 1,6

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London, AL-HAYAH — In two separate statements the Algerian Armed Islamic Group [GIA] has threatened to kill fuel companies' workers, and ordered young people of conscription age not to travel and to remain in their place of residence.

In statement No. 42 signed by its amir Abou Abderrahmane Amin [Djemal Zetouni], the GIA said that it "orders" all oil company workers "to stop work in order to avert evil and prevent fighting. He who stops does himself a favor, but he who does not stop work is insisting on fighting, does himself an injustice, and shall be killed." The GIA explained that its warning includes the SONATRACH and NAFTAL companies' workers and anyone who makes deals with them, be they individuals or companies. It stated that Algerian oil companies are in league with the "the principal atheists."

In another statement, No. 41 (published by the AL-ANSAR bulletin in its issue last Friday [9 February]), the GIA addressed the issue of reservists in the Algerian Army, saying: "The reservists represent the majority in the apostates' army. They are the largest group in any barracks, and the ones most likely to carry out all operations. The GIA some time ago issued orders to those who have reached military age not to yield to the tyrants, but instead to repudiate them, and he who does not shall be killed."

The GIA pointed out that its elements sometimes detain young people of military age in various regions of Algeria, but that they refrain from killing them for lack of proof on whether they have actually been drafted or not. It added: "Consequently, and in accordance with this ban, the GIA prohibits long-distance travel by anyone of military age," between 19 and 22 years old. It pointed out that this decision "prohibits the young people of the east from traveling to the west, center, or south, and, similarly, prevents the young people from the south from traveling to the east, center, or west. He who refuses to comply with this order and is found far from his residence area shall be killed. No excuse shall be accepted, be it a business trip, travel for pleasure, studies, to accompany someone, being unaware of the statement, coercion, loss of documents, or anything else. Vehicle owners must refrain from carrying those concerned. Any vehicle carrying those concerned by the ban shall be confiscated or burned." [passage omitted]

Algeria: UGTA Gives Ultimatum to Prime Minister on Wage Cuts

LD1402194396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the second and last day of the strike staged to protest the prime minister's decision to make proportional cuts in salaries [of public sector employees], the secretary general of the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA] gave a news conference this afternoon in which he assessed the strike. Mr. Benhamouda began by saying that the strike was supported by various parts of the public sector with a 76 percent response, according to him.

The UGTA secretary general gave the prime minister until the end of this month to cancel his decision. He also talked about the measures the trade unions will take if this demand is not met.

Algeria: UGTA Strike Receives '95% Support'

LD1402123596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] This is the second day of the general strike launched by the union federation [General Union of Algerian Workers, UGTA] in protest against the government's decision to cut wages to pay the wages of 200,000 civil servants.

According to the union federation, the strike has received overwhelming support. An estimate carried out in 11 provinces by the UGTA at noon yesterday revealed that the strike had received about 90-percent support from civil servants.

On the second day, and at around the same time, the union federation's estimate is similar. This is what Mr. Sedi Said, who is responsible for foreign relations and emigration at the national secretariat, confirmed a few seconds ago. He spoke to Mohane Redaoui:

[Begin Said recording] Today's support rate comes close to 95 percent, 3 percent up on [yesterday's rate of] 92 percent. On the whole, at around 1230 [1130 GMT], the strike is getting about 95-percent support in the 48 provinces. [end recording]

Other estimates will be given at 1500 this afternoon by the UGTA at La Maison du Peuple.

There have been no comments from the authorities so far. We are expecting a news conference.

There is minimum service in sensitive areas such as health and transport. [passage omitted]

Algeria: UGTA Leader Confirms Strike Over

LD1402234696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the second and last day of the strike staged in protest over the prime minister's decision to cut salaries of [public sector workers] every month and proportionally, Abdelhak Benhamouda, secretary general of the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA], held a news conference this evening in which he announced the end of the two-day strike. He said that there had been a large response to the call for a strike action.

Benhamouda also called on the workers to return to work tomorrow Thursday.

Egypt

Egypt: Yemeni Minister Meets Mubarak, Comments on Island Dispute

NC1402165796 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1210 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Feb (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak has received a verbal message from Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih on the current Yemeni-Eritrean dispute over the al-Hanish island, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa said today.

Musa, speaking after President Mubarak's meeting with Yemeni Foreign Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Karim al-Iryani, described the meeting as very important. During it the Yemeni minister explained the efforts made and steps taken as part of the French mediation, as well as the recent contacts between Yemen and Eritrea through mediators. Musa added: Naturally Yemen has been briefed on the results of Eritrean President Afworki's visit to Cairo the day before yesterday and his talks with President Mubarak.

For his part, Dr. al-Iryani stressed that the message he had conveyed to President Mubarak reflects the depth of Egyptian-Yemeni ties. The message, he added, concerns developments in the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict, the Eritrean aggression against al-Hanish al-Kabir island, and the ongoing efforts to reach a peaceful solution of this problem. He pointed out that he had briefed President Mubarak on the advanced stage reached by French mediation, which will resume today. He noted that the French envoy is in Asmara today and will arrive in Sanaa later this evening.

The Yemeni foreign minister emphasized that his country accepts the formula recently proposed by France in a message sent by French President Jacques Chirac to Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Eritrean President Afworki. Explaining that the proposed French formula has become acceptable to Yemen, al-Iryani added: We hope it will meet with the same response from the Eritrean side. Only then can we say that a peaceful solution defusing any likelihood of a military conflict would be one hundred percent secured and guaranteed. He hoped that the French envoy would succeed in his mission.

Asked about Egypt's role in resolving the Yemeni-Eritrean conflict, Dr. al-Iryani stressed that contacts and exchanges between Presidents Mubarak and Salih will always continue and that the nature of bilateral relations dictates these exchanges on this issue and on other important issues.

Asked about reports of a Yemeni-Eritrean summit to be held in Cairo soon, the Yemeni foreign minister denied that any date has been set for this summit. He added: It is better to let French mediation take its course. Any other meetings will be within the framework of an agreement in principle to which all parties will comply to ensure that solutions will be guaranteed should any meeting at any level take place. He pointed out that the issue now is for both sides to agree on the principles that would defuse the crisis and secure a peaceful solution.

Asked about Eritrea's approval to keep troops from both countries on the island, al-Iryani noted that as he had said before this is part of the agreement in principle in which that the Yemeni side accepted the formula presented by the French side. We are waiting for the Eritrean answer and when we receive one we can answer this question, he added.

Egypt: Mubarak Receives Ambassador to Russia

NC1402123196 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1100 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Husni Mubarak received Dr. Rida Shihatah, who is Egypt's ambassador in Moscow, at the presidential headquarters this morning. Shihatah made a statement afterward, saying he submitted a report to President Mubarak on the progress of relations between Egypt and Russia. He also conveyed to the president the great appreciation Russia has for the president and for Egypt because of peace and the successful economic reform experiment, considered one of the most successful economic reform experiments in the Third World. In addition, Russia appreciates Egypt's role in strengthening stability and combating terrorism. Egypt's ambassador in Moscow said he discussed with the president the broad scope for developing current and future relations in various sectors, especially in view of a conference in Cairo between 4 and 7 March entitled "Russia and the Arab World."

Egypt: Israeli Minister's Remarks on UN-Iraq Deal Criticized

NC1502091696 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0705 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM has criticized Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's statements following his meeting with Rolf Ekeus, head of the UN commission charged with removing Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

The paper is astonished that Baraq should say he fears the pushing through of the formula of oil for food—the basis of Iraq's negotiations with the United Nations. His excuse is that the money Iraq will receive might be channeled to arms purchases.

In its editorial today, the paper adds that the Israeli minister's remarks intentionally ignore that the current talks between Iraq and the international organization aim to reach a formula making the United Nations supervise the implementation of the agreement's provisions. Besides, it adds, Iraq's armament programs are under regular supervision and inspection by international agencies and UN committees.

The paper says these statements made by an official whose country refuses to subject its nuclear program to international control contradict the simplest rules of human rights.

Egypt: Paper Assails Sudanese Leaders for Harboring 'Terrorists'

NC1502090896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
0702 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR has denounced the Sudanese al-Bashir-al-Turabi regime's naive and desperate attempts to emerge from its serious problem. The regime embroiled itself in that problem when it thought it could escape the world's punishment after its mean plot to get rid of a leader of the largest Arab and African country using the methods of organized criminal gangs.

In its editorial today the paper says the ruling regime in Khartoum unveiled its sick thinking when it resorted to this utterly naive maneuver. Its aim was to pretend to be innocent of this filthy crime months after its failure by calling on the Sudanese people to help arrest the criminals. The regime, it adds, knows better than anyone where they are.

The paper says that no intelligence is needed to realize that al-Turabi and his subordinate, al-Bashir, are willing to do anything to hide these terrorists, even getting rid of them using any means to prevent their despicable role in plotting this crime, which had a strong impact worldwide, from being revealed.

The paper notes that the only mark left by this naive maneuver is smiles of mockery at the Khartoum government's announcement following a unanimous Security Council resolution denouncing the Sudanese Government for this ugly crime.

The paper regrets that the Sudanese people will be the victim of this resolution. It says that if the Sudanese rulers had a shred of morality they would have confessed their unforgivable crime.

Egypt: 2 'Terrorist' Leaders Killed; Papers on Islamabad Bombing Found

NC1402154196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1220 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 14 Feb (MENA)—An official security source at the Interior Ministry today said that the two terrorists who were killed last night were two of the most prominent wanted terrorists fleeing from the governorates of Asyut and Suhaj.

The security source said leading terrorist Mahmud Muhammad Ahmad 'Abdallah, nicknamed Mahmud al-Walidi, is a dismissed teacher and a leading fugitive who has been on the run for a long time. Known for his violent and bloody methods, he is wanted in connection with several cases, notably the assassination of Lieutenant Colonel Mahran 'Abd-al-Rahim of the State Security Intelligence Agency, bank bombings, the assassination of a policeman in al-Badari, and attacks on tour ships.

The source said the second terrorist, 'Ali Muhammad 'Ali Sutuhi, is wanted in connection with many cases, foremost of which are bank bombings and the reorganization of the group's military wing in Suhaj.

The source said a search of the terrorists' main hideout resulted in the seizure of an automatic rifle, four loaded magazines, a Beretta pistol that was taken from an assassinated police officer in al-Sahil, and a number of organizational documents and forged cards.

A handwritten statement attributed to the group known as International Justice was also found in the hideout. It includes instructions for the criminal bombing of the Egyptian Embassy in Islamabad. The prosecution was notified to start an inquiry.

Egypt: 'Important Document' on Embassy Blast Seized in Suhaj

NC1502081996 Cairo MENA in English
0723 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Cairo, 15 Feb (MENA)—A very important document was seized in a terrorist den in Suhaj, Upper Egypt, revealing information about the blast of the Egyptian Embassy in Pakistan, the [Cairo] papers said.

Two of the most dangerous Upper Egypt terrorists were caught in the process.

Some 100 repentant terrorists will be released from prison next week on the occasion of Ramadan Bayram, Cairo press reported. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood Leader on New Party, Islamic State

NC1402112596 Cairo AL-AHALI in Arabic 7 Feb 96 p 9

[Interview with MB General Guide Mustafa Mashhur by 'Abd-al-Rahim 'Ali in Cairo; date not given—first four paragraphs AL-AHALI introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Mustafa Mashhur, the Muslim Brotherhood's [MB] strongman, rose to become general guide after Counselor Hamid Abu-al-Nasr's death. His accession comes amid extremely difficult circumstances; the Brotherhood has suffered powerful setbacks and had restrictions imposed on it, including the closure of its headquarters in al-Tawfiqiyah Street and the jailing of some of its members for between three and seven years.

Worse still is that the new general guide is being faced by a general walkout by a group of youthful members who want to establish alternative political organizations and who have announced that they do not belong organizationally to the Brotherhood. Mashhur rejects their claim and asserts that they are only warding off suspicion until they can get their new party registered. Mashhur said that at any rate this new party does not represent the MB.

These developments raise new questions, notably about the future of the MB and the method by which the new general guide will steer the organization in the face of the storm.

On my way to Mustafa Mashhur's office, I thought of something a young Muslim brother and a close friend told me about the basic difference between the Brotherhood's old guard and the new generation of members. My friend tried to convince me that a patronizing attitude, sometimes bluntly expressed, distinguishes the old generation, the iron generation. He said the youthful members are trying to rid themselves of this attitude, persuade themselves of the usefulness of public service, and build bridges with all other political forces without pretending to be the sole possessors of the ultimate truth. I did not fully understand what my friend said. I think you would feel the same way until you read what the new MB general guide says:

['Ali] There have long been disagreements within the Brotherhood about whether to form a political party. Several members of the old guard left the organization once and decided to work alone. Now a group of youthful members has left to form a political party. What do you think of this controversy?

[Mashhur] When Hasan al-Banna founded the MB, he set two goals for the organization: liberating the homeland and establishing an Islamic caliphate on this liberated homeland. He realized that the latter goal was a very ambitious one and needed time to attain. So he set out stages of action beginning with the education of the Muslim individual, then the Muslim family, Muslim society, and finally the Muslim government. He told his followers that they would face ordeals and tribulations. This actually happened. We are still subject to ordeals. These ordeals are a test. Anyone can say I am a Muslim Brother but the true test of a Muslim Brother is his capacity for endurance. We force no one to stay with us. If someone disagrees with us, he can leave. Those who can endure and face the ordeals are welcome. As for our view of the controversy surrounding the founding of a political party, we believe the MB is a doctrinal organization that adheres to the teachings of Islam. Political parties, meanwhile, are subject to statutes. This is why we cannot turn the Brotherhood into a political party, regardless of the circumstances. If we do think of forming a political party, it will only be a facade, that is, one aspect of the organization's political activity and a way of creating space for the Brotherhood in public life. The MB will remain a much larger concern than any political party. Let me tell you this: When we discussed the prospect of forming a political party, we were told that the government does not approve of a MB party, because, in that case, it must also allow the formation of a Christian party, thus provoking sectarian strife.

['Ali] When did you apply to form a party and when was your application rejected?

[Mashhur] We did not apply but the idea emerged when the government announced the 1984 elections and asserted that they would be held according to party lists and that no one outside the parties would nominate himself. 'Umar al-Talmasani [a former general guide of the Brothers] said then: Why do we not form a party through which we will run for elections? We reached agreement at the time to ally ourselves with any existing party and struck an alliance with the Wafd Party. So the idea emerged because of a pressing need and it appeared again in light of the requirements imposed by this stage. As for our conviction, if we are allowed to operate publicly as a MB, we will never contemplate forming a party.

['Ali] Does this mean you are now considering the formation of a party as a facade for the MB to be a necessity?

[Mashhur] We are considering the issue but think the time is not right.

['Ali] Do you not agree with me that making decisions for the future is logically not acceptable?

[Mashhur] Rejecting the formation of a party is a political decision. Applying for a party now and the rejection of such an application will place us in a deadlock of being rejected by the judiciary. This might increase the intransigence toward us. Besides, we filed a suit at the State Council against the decision banning us from public action. A verdict is awaited.

['Ali] There are reports about the Guidance Bureau investigating the al-Wasat Party's Muslim Brothers.

[Mashhur] We will investigate no one. We banned no one from applying to form a party. But we do not regard the party they applied for as representative of the Brothers.

['Ali] What do you say about the al-Wasat Party Brothers' announcement that, organizationally, they do not now consider themselves as belonging to the Muslim Brothers?

[Mashhur] They say this to ward off suspicion because the government declares that the Muslim Brothers are an illegitimate group and says that the so-called Muslim Brothers Organization does not exist in Egypt. These young men want to defend themselves because they are in an illegitimate organization; they will want their party to be accepted. But they have not seceded from us and they are still members of the Muslim Brothers Organization.

['Ali] After what the MB has experienced recently, have any contacts been established with the government to explain your point of view?

[Mashhur] No contact has been made with the current regime. On the contrary, we demanded a dialogue. It was rejected, which is awkward. We had no problems with this regime before. Evidence of this is that Yasir 'Arafat visited us more than once in our headquarters in al-Tawfiqiyah and so did former Sudanese Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi. All this took place with the government's knowledge and consent.

But recently the government seems to have been fearing that our participation in parliamentary elections and winning large support would affect its political clout, especially after it saw our success in the trade unions. So it decided to curtail us.

['Ali] There are consultations under way with some youngsters of the MB to join the al-Wasat Party. What would happen if the formation of a party were to be approved and these youngsters joined it?

[Mashhur] The MB will pursue its line and this will not affect its policy. Anyone wishing to pursue our policy with us is welcome and anyone wishing to join that party can be let go. We force no one to stick with us.

['Ali] You have rejected the idea of forming a front with other parties and called only for coordination. Why?

[Mashhur] A front means complete agreement on principles. For us to compel party leaders to adhere to our Islamic principle is difficult. Perhaps they do not want Islam but we coordinate with them on agreed-upon fringe issues. Anyway, forming a front with them is impossible in view of the stark disparity between us and them.

['Ali] What about your ceaseless support for the al-Turabi regime in Sudan, despite its terrorist practices?

[Mashhur] The MB's ideas were introduced in Sudan in the 1930's. Some people only adopted the brotherhood ideas. Others used the ideas and became affiliated with the organization. Al-Turabi belongs to the first group, which rejected the organization. He later joined al-Numayri's government. We rejected this step because we considered it a deviation from the MB. The name of al-Turabi, however, remained linked to Islam. He later established a front which he called the Russian Islamic Front [as published].

We do not support al-Turabi with heart and soul, but we are not against him. However, we have observations. He will try to establish Islamic rule according to his concept. Therefore, we should not be held responsible for his behavior because his experiment is not a brotherhood one.

['Ali] What are your observations on al-Turabi?

[Mashhur] For example, al-Turabi assumed power by means of a coup, and we disapprove of the coup method as a way to assume power before preparing the base properly. The base must be prepared to accept Islamic rule and avert the occurrence of any other coups. He carried out a coup without good and sound preparations.

['Ali] In other words, you are telling me that if the base is properly founded, it does not matter how you reach power?

[Mashhur] Certainly, the method is not important because the base will be prepared to accept Islamic rule, and therefore, there is no need to talk about the method.

['Ali] If you reach power, no matter how you do it, would you approve the presence of the existing parties to compete with you in a democratic way?

[Mashhur] We will agree provided their programs do not violate the principles of true Islam. Violators will be referred to the judiciary, which will decide whether they will be allowed to continue.

['Ali] Who will determine if this or that party violates the principles of Islam?

[Mashhur] The state.

['Ali] But you will be the state then. Therefore, who will tell what is Islam and what is not Islam? The state accuses you of being terrorists and the judiciary is passing prison sentences against your cadres, and you are denying all the charges.

[Mashhur] I believe the comparison here is not fair, because any MB member who assumes powers will be brought up according to the teachings of true Islam. He will rule armed with the true Islam that he learned. Islam follows clear traditions.

['Ali] These traditions are true from your point of view. But how can we tell that they are true. Islam is one thing and the Muslims' understanding of Islam is another. Do you not agree with me?

[Mashhur] Islam follows clear traditions. The Muslims differed in understanding Islam, hence many sects surfaced such as Shiism, Sunnism, al-Azidiyah, et cetera. But Hasan al-Banna realized the situation and examined the true and comprehensive concept of Islam. He laid down 20 principles for this concept as a framework to protect it against deviation. Had the concept not been a mainstay of the MB's pledge of allegiance, various MB ideological schools and more than one guide would have emerged. But the brotherhood remained as one group with one comprehensive concept. We challenge any Muslim ulema who would say that there is something wrong with the 20 principles. Therefore, when we assume power and abide by these true concepts, there will be no problems.

['Ali] What is your opinion of the ideas propagated by al-Turabi, Khomeyni, and the Wahhabite system in Saudi Arabia?

[Mashhur] The Shiites have their own interpretations of religion. When they carried out their revolution, we had a lot of debates with them but they stuck to their own views. As for al-Turabi, I think that Hasan al-Banna was more accurate than he was and adhered more faithfully to Islamic concepts. The proof is that Muslim ulema did not object to al-Banna's ideas. His books are still circulating.

['Ali] What about Saudi Arabia?

[Mashhur] We have nothing to say about Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, we think that al-Banna's understanding of Islam was the most accurate one. We are willing to listen to anyone who wishes to debate this point with us and prove us wrong if he can.

['Ali] This is your attitude on Islamist experiments that are more or less close to you. What will your attitude be if you reach power alongside a party like the National Progressive Unionist Grouping, which does not even claim that it is an Islamic party?

[Mashhur] We will allow it to offer its program to the people as long as this program contains nothing openly contrary to Islamic teachings.

['Ali] Who will decide when someone is acting contrary to Islamic teachings? You?

[Mashhur] The decision will be based on the basic principles drawn from the Koran, the prophet's tradition, and the basic ideas established by Hasan al-Banna. We believe that al-Banna's ideas represent the most accurate interpretation of our religion.

['Ali] One last question. How do you envisage the MB's future in light of current circumstances? What is your answer to the charge that you are the leader of the international organization called the MB, which sponsors terrorism?

[Mashhur] To begin with, all the labels given to me like "hawk" and "violent man," et cetera, are false accusations. All Muslim Brothers think and feel alike and follow one policy. There are neither hawks nor doves among them. They do not approve of violence or rebellion against the existing government. The rumors about an international MB organization are an old story. When [former Egyptian President] Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir began putting pressure on the Muslim Brothers in 1964 and 1965, many left the country and spread out to Arab and foreign countries where they propagated the Brotherhood's ideology and attracted many new youthful members. Several MB organizations were thus established. It is this that they call the international organization of the MB, but the facts are different. All those organizations are independent and subject to the laws of the countries where they exist. We do not interfere in the affairs of any other country. As to how I see the future, I will tell you this: When the Ottoman Caliphate was toppled in 1924, Hasan al-Banna decided that the Muslims must not live without a united country. They would face numerous difficulties. Al-Banna decided that no one man could achieve the objective of a united Muslim state, but that a united organization could. Therefore he founded the MB. A united Muslim state is the aim and it is the future. We continue trying to attain this objective. The time to achieve this should not be measured by individual life spans. An international state should not be measured by individual lifetimes, but with the lifetimes of nations and their historical messages. The Zionist entity is a perfect example: They have been planning and dreaming for more than a hundred years of establishing a Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates. They have not yet succeeded in achieving their full goal, but they continue to try. As to us, if we want to establish an international state, then it is not too long if we wait for a century or two. Work continues towards this objective, sometimes at a slower pace because of circumstances and the need to propagate the word of God. We will never stop, relent, or lose sight of our goals. Despite the fierce onslaught against us, we are confident that the future is ours.

Sudan

Sudan: Government Rebuts Ethiopian Statement on Mubarak Suspects

EA1502102496 Khartoum SUNA in Arabic 1700 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Khartoum, 14 February—The Foreign Ministry has stressed that the serious and rigorous steps being taken by the Sudanese Government to apprehend those suspected of involvement in the attempt to assassinate the Egyptian president — an event that dented the credibility of the Addis Ababa regime — essentially emanates from Sudan's firm commitment to the principles of justice and the resolutions of the Organization of African Unity. It was never an attempt to please and (?curry favor) with the Addis Ababa regime which continues to incriminate Sudan.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman made the remarks while commenting on the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry statement which [word indistinct] the serious and sincere efforts being made by Sudan to track down the suspects. [passage omitted]

He pointed out that the Ethiopian Foreign Ministry statement was more proof of Ethiopia's attempts to incriminate Sudan. [passage omitted]

Tunisia

Tunisia: Amnesty International on Trial of Opposition Leader

LD1402125696 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Tunisia, the second trial of the president of the Socialist Democrats Movement, the main legal opposition party, opens today. Mr. Mohamed Moada is accused of spying for a foreign country. He was sentenced to two years in prison for currency exchange fraud on 2 February.

Amnesty International issued a statement describing the trial as unjust and noted that certain charges against Moada are punishable by the death. Amnesty wonders if Mr. Moada is being held solely for his peaceful political activities and has called for his immediate and unconditional release.

Tunisia: Opposition Leader Faces Trial for 'Secret' Libyan Ties

LD1402152396 Paris Radio France International in French 1100 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mohamed Moada, leader of the Tunisian parliamentary opposition, is expected to stand trial in Tunis today for dishonorable involvement with a foreign state. The Tunisian judiciary reproaches him for having had, I quote, secret and incriminating relations with Libya .

The human rights organization Amnesty International says it is concerned by this trial, which is expected to take place behind closed doors.

Here is (Donatella Rovera), Amnesty International's Maghreb officer:

[Begin (Rovera) recording] We fear the arrest, detention, and judicial charges against Mr. Moada may have something to do with his peaceful political activities. One should bear in mind that the charges, which are extremely serious, as you can see, imply the death penalty.

Amnesty International has designated an observer who will attend the trial to monitor the procedures. We are concerned by the context in which political trials have been held in Tunisia over the last few years... [pauses] Fair trials have been the exceptions rather than the norm. [end recording]

Tunisia: Trial of Socialist Democrats Leader Postponed

LD1402225896 Paris Radio France International in French 1730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Tunisia, the trial of Mohamed Moada for alleged ties with the Libyan secret services, which was scheduled to begin today, has been postponed. The head of the opposition party [Socialist Democrats Movement] did not appear at the hearing. The reason for his absence is not known. The trial will now begin on 28 February.

Amnesty International, which has expressed concern over Moada's situation, has already called for his immediate release. Mohamed Moada was arrested on 10 October last year.

Bahrain

Bahrain: Car Bomb Reportedly Explodes in 'Isa City

*NC1402163096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1600 GMT 14 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 14 Feb (MENA)—Informed sources in Manama have reported that a booby-trapped car exploded today near a commercial center in 'Isa city in southern Manama without causing any casualties.

Today's explosion comes three days after a locally-made bomb exploded in the lobby of the Diplomat Hotel in downtown Manama, wounding three persons.

Bahrain: Daily Calls 'Isa Blast 'Isolated Incident'

*JN1502104496 Manama WAKH in Arabic
0807 GMT 15 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 15 Feb (WAKH)—The newspapers AL-AYYAM and AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ published here today said that acts of sabotage against innocent people will not undermine the homeland's security or shake up the stability this country enjoys.

AL-AYYAM says that these regrettable incidents against innocent people perpetrated by those without a conscience showed, despite their ugliness, the mettles of men and cohesion among members of our secure society. All this came as a response to the intentions and schemes of sabotage groups, whose efforts primarily focused on creating a rift in this society.

The paper adds: The people's categorical rejection of acts by sabotage groups has harbored more hatred in the hearts of the perpetrators of these schemes. Hence, these perpetrators sought revenge against the people of this society and wanted to sow fear in the citizens and residents by bombing public places.

The paper continues to say: The real objectives which these perpetrators hid behind false slogans did not fool anyone ever since they began fabricating these crises. However, the state, as always, adopted a civilized method of tackling these transient events, proceeding from its confidence in the awareness and alertness of our people — something that was not fathomed by this band.

For its part, AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says: The explosion of a booby-trapped car near a commercial center in 'Isa city is considered an isolated incident whose effects do not go beyond an attempt to disturb the people and create some form of an empty propagandist clamor. However, this incident reflects, once again, the vileness, betrayal, and back stabbing followed by the terrorist groups in their desperate attempt to disturb security in the country after the bodies concerned managed to isolate and besiege them.

The paper says: Those tamperers now have no purpose other than terrorizing the secure people and attempting to spoil their joy amid preparations to celebrate the [al-Fitr] feast at the end of the blessed month of fasting and to harm the touristic season during this feast.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ adds: Therefore, just like other conspirators and after their sabotage scheme was aborted, they scheme in the dark and carry out such desperate and foolish acts in an attempt to draw attention and create clamor that does not undermine the march of prosperity in the homeland.

The paper concludes by saying: This desperate attempt on their part will never undermine the homeland's security or shake up the stability the whole country enjoys. It will only add to the people's anger against and despise toward those criminals who are tampering in the dark and whose objective is to harm and terrorize innocent and secure people.

Bahrain: Kuwait Embassy Receives Threats of 'Subversive Acts'

*NC1502120096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1135 GMT 15 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 15 Feb (MENA)—Kuwait's Embassy in Bahrain has received a threat that subversive acts will be carried out unless Kuwait changes its stance supporting Bahrain in the current events there.

A Kuwaiti source said today that such threats will not change Kuwait's stance a bit. He added that Kuwait was continuing its support and backing for Bahrain in its measures to protect its security and stability.

Bahrain: Prime Minister Vows Hotel Bombers To Be Punished

*NC1402191896 Manama Bahrain Radio Network
in Arabic 1830 GMT 14 Feb 96*

[FBIS Translated Text] His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the prime minister, visited the al-Salmaniyah Medical Center where he inquired about the health of citizen Khalil 'Abdallah Salman, who was wounded when an incendiary bomb exploded at the Diplomat Hotel on Sunday [11 February] evening. His Highness the prime minister wished the citizen a speedy recovery, indicating that the government will provide him with free medical and humanitarian care until he returns to work.

His Highness Shaykh Khalifah expressed regret over this incident, which endangered the lives of innocent people. He affirmed that the culprits will not escape just punishment.

Bahrain: Opposition Calls For General Strike

MS1502093196 London THE GUARDIAN in English 13 Feb 96 p 12

[Report by Kathy Evans: "Bahrain Faces General Strike"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Bahraini opposition has announced a general strike, starting in the next few days to coincide with the feast marking the end of Ramadan and the year's biggest shopping spree.

A call has gone out to all shopkeepers and schools to observe the strike, though opposition sources say they are not asking employees to join for fear they may lose their jobs. It is the first such national strike to be called in the Gulf.

The strike call comes as staff at Bahrain's Diplomat Hotel continue the clear-up after Sunday night's bomb explosion, which injured four people. This was the second bomb to hit a hotel frequented by foreigners; scores of others have targeted public places and shopping precincts.

Bahraini businessmen had been hoping for a consumer boom over the holiday to boost flagging sales and declining tourism. In normal circumstances, the end of Ramadan would have been marked by an influx of thirsty Arabs from the neighbouring "dry" states of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

"I think many Saudis will cancel after this second bomb," one hotelier said. "With luck the government and the opposition will start talking about peace soon."

Both Bahrain's opposition groups say they do not know who is behind the bombs. They deny the authorities' allegations of Iranian involvement in the terror campaign.

"We think these bombs are being planted by the government intelligence agencies to prepare the people for long jail sentences being imposed on our leaders currently in detention," a spokesman for the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain said.

London-based officials of the group denied having anything to do with the explosion, though international news agencies in Bahrain had earlier reported receiving calls shortly before the blast from a man identifying himself as a member of the group, who warned of the explosion and threatened more violence once Ramadan was over.

Both the Islamic Front and the more moderate Bahrain Freedom Movement say they want to reopen talks with the government on restoring the constitution.

Bahrain: Opposition Calls For Boycott, Civil Disobedience

MM1402162296 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Manama, London, al-Quds al-'Arabi — The Free Men Movement of Bahrain [harakat ahrar al-bahrayn] (opposition abroad) urged the Bahraini people yesterday, Tuesday [13 February], not to celebrate the 'Id al-Fitr in protest at "the violation of human rights" in Bahrain.

In a statement faxed to AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI the movement urged "the people to boycott merchants or any trade, cultural, or sports establishments publishing statements supporting the suppression of the national movement and its imprisoned leaders."

The statement urged residents "to buy only the essentials before and after the 'Id from merchants and establishments adopting honorable stands supportive of the Bahraini people's just rights." It also urged "mass resignations from the sports clubs publishing statements supporting the government."

The Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain [al-jabhah al-islamiyah li tahrir al-bahrayn] urged traders Monday "to close their shops as an expression of their antiregime protest." And it urged the people "to stop buying or selling any items and to leave the streets empty 18 through 20 February as an open declaration of the will to bring about a comprehensive change and defy the government's intransigent stand which is backed by multinational forces."

The Bahraini opposition's call for a general strike and civil disobedience is the first of its kind in a Gulf state. [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Husayn Said 'Deliberately Snubbed' by King Fahd

MM1502091796 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 14 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Ashraf Fu'ad in Dub: "Diplomats in Riyadh Confirm Saudi King Deliberately Snubbed His Jordanian Counterpart for Personal Reasons"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Analysts said yesterday that King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz has again snubbed Jordanian monarch King Husayn, but that Riyadh did not go as far as a categorical refusal to deal with the man who, it feels, abandoned it during the Gulf crisis.

Early yesterday morning, King Fahd chaired a cabinet meeting for the first time since his illness last November.

King Husayn returned home earlier than planned on the morning of the day before yesterday, following a short visit to perform the 'Umrah [minor pilgrimage] in Saudi Arabia without meeting King Fahd.

This is the second time in two years that the Jordanian monarch has not been able to meet with King Fahd during his visit to Saudi Arabia.

An Arab analyst said that the fact that King Fahd chaired the cabinet meeting a few hours after King Husayn's departure "confirms that it is a snub."

He added that "it is a gentle and not a total snub, like the last time" when King Husayn did not meet with any government official in Saudi Arabia. [passage omitted]

Iraq: UN Oil-for-Food Talks Continue

JN1402173596 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1705 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 14 Feb (INA)—Iraqi and UN delegations began a new session of dialogue this morning on the issue of oil-for-food, medicine, and basic humanitarian needs for the Iraqi people.

In a brief statement before joining the session, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation, said he hoped for reaching the best results.

INA correspondent in New York said that Hans Corell, UN undersecretary general for legal affairs, and head of the UN delegation, is expected to brief the UN Security Council members on the talks, today afternoon, New York time.

Iraq: UN Says Talks To Continue Until Agreement

JN1402202096 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iraqi and UN delegations began a new session within the framework of official dialogue this morning on the issue of oil-for-food, medicine, and basic humanitarian needs for the Iraqi people.

Hans Corell, UN undersecretary general for legal affairs, and head of the UN delegation, is expected to brief the UN Security Council members on the talks, at an unofficial session of consultations, at a later time.

The morning session was adjourned after one hour and a half, on the understanding that the two delegations will resume sessions later today. The United Nations said that the session which was held this morning focused on the discussion of all elements related to the implementation of the oil-for-food formula and the basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The United Nations stressed that the talks will continue until an agreement is reached between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat.

Iraq: UN Consultations on Oil Talks, Statements Reported

JN1502140896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 15 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The UN Security Council held an unofficial session of consultations yesterday afternoon, New York time. Most of the consultations focused on Iraq. At the beginning, the UN Security Council listened to a briefing by Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation to the dialogue with Iraq. Afterward, Ambassador Rolf Ekeus, head of the Special Commission, responded to queries by a number of UN Security Council members on the import-export mechanism proposed to the Council so that a pertinent decision is taken.

After the consultations, Corell made a statement to reporters in which he said: A new session was held at 1700 yesterday, Wednesday [14 February], and another session will be held on 15 February. He added: We will work in accordance with our agenda. Work is proceeding according to expectations. All points on the agenda are being discussed. He added that the talks are taking place in a fruitful, businesslike atmosphere.

In a separate development, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the United Nations, told the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY, that yesterday's sessions were characterized by positive and constructive discussions.

Iraq: Trailers, Trucks Ready To Transport Food, Medicine

JN1402154696 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1150 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 14 Feb (INA)—The Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications has prepared thousands of specialized and nonspecialized trailers and trucks to participate in transporting food, medicine, and humanitarian needs—which will arrive at the Iraqi ports of Umm Qasr, Khawr al-Zubayr, and al-Ma'qil—to the Iraqi governorates aboard the railcars and the land fleet.

This was revealed to INA by the head of the Transport and Operations Department at the State Enterprise for Iraq's Railways. He said that large numbers of closed and open trucks as well as specialized trucks have been moved to transport cereals to the port of Umm Qasr. Meanwhile, the enterprise's plants and workshops continue to prepare large numbers of other trucks, including the trailers needed to carry large loads, and transfer them to the railway stations in the southern region, he noted.

He added that the enterprise is ready to transport any quantity of food, medicine, and humanitarian needs, and that the enterprise's engineering teams have finalized the maintenance operations for the railways in the southern region in order to carry large transportation loads and increase the speed of trains. During the maintenance operations, the worn bars and rails were replaced, and mechanical and manual maintenance equipment was used.

He said that the maintenance operations included the main route between the al-Shu'aybah station and al-

Nasiriyah, and the route between the al-Zubayr railway station and the port of Umm Qasr. They also included consolidating the network of railways in the southern region in general.

He also pointed out that the warehouses, distributed in all governorates, and workers have been prepared to receive the largest possible number of trains and unload them as soon as possible.

Iraq: $5 Million Allocated To Pay Merchant's Dues

JN1502103296 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0845 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 15 Feb (INA)—President Saddam Husayn ordered the disbursement of $5 million to pay for part of the dues of the merchants supplying foodstuffs.

During the Council of Minister's eight session yesterday, President Saddam Husayn ordered that the dues of the food merchants who signed contracts with the Trade Ministry be paid in cash and in dollars to encourage them for their participation in consolidating the current positive results in the local markets and for selflessly providing food at prices that enhance the steadfastness of the forbearing Iraqi people.

Iraq: Government Spokesman Reacts to Ekeus-Baraq Meeting

JN1402205696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] An official Foreign Ministry spokesman has stated the following to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY:

Yesterday, Tuesday, 13 February 1996, news agencies carried a report on a meeting between Rolf Ekeus, UN Special Commission Chairman, and Ehud Baraq, foreign minister of the Zionist entity, in New York. Following the meeting, the Zionist minister made statements full of poison, rancor, and lies against Iraq and its historic leader President Saddam Husayn, may God watch over him.

Among the cheap lies of the Zionist entity's foreign minister was the statement: The Iraqis' action, particularly in the field of nonconvential weapons capability, poses a threat to the future stability, not only of the Middle East, but the entire world.

The Foreign Ministry's official spokesman added: The Zionist minister's statement not only calls for astonishment, but also for strong ridicule by Iraq, the sons of the Arab nation throughout the Arab homeland, and the world, particularly all those who work for and the informed people at the United Nations and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]. All sides know that the Zionist entity is the only party which possesses all kinds of mass destruction weapons—nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons, and the long- range missiles which threaten the security, safety, and future of the Arab nation and all the other peoples in the region. The world knows full well that the Zionist entity refuses to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, and to open its nuclear facilities to the IAEA's control system, while Iraq and the other Arab countries joined this treaty long ago.

The Foreign Ministry's official spokesman added: While we are astonished at Zionist Minister Ehud Baraq's allegations and lies, we cannot but express our astonishment at Rolf Ekeus' meeting with him. Ekeus' task, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 687 and 715, should not be a forum to be exploited by those who have ulterior motives to peddle their sick intentions and stands. We expect Ekeus to pay attention to such cases, and to keep the Special Commission away from the attempts to exploit it by those who have ulterior motives, such as the Zionist entity's foreign minister.

The Foreign Ministry will contact Ekeus to clarify this issue, and to foil the schemes of those who harbor evil intentions toward Iraq and the UN Special Commission itself.

Iraq: Perry's Remarks on Moves To Topple Government Criticized

JN1402171396 Baghdad INA in English 1330 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Baghdad, Feb 14, INA—An Iraqi daily has stressed that the Iraqis are confident that they can crush and bury all malicious conspiracies that are hatched against them from both regional and international circles and would never be disheartened by the use of media and psychologic warfare.

Commenting on latest statement of U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry which said that U.S. and some other countries in the region are working together to hasten the downfall of the Iraqi Government, the daily "BAGHDAD OBSERVER" said that the statement was not a surprise to the Iraqis to hear, because the U.S. has been trying, without success, to topple the Iraqi Government of President Saddam Husayn since the early seventies when the U.S. and Iran worked together in a sinister partnership to undermine the Iraqi Government by backing the Kurdish insurgency in the north of the country.

The statement of the U.S. defense secretary is no surprise to Iraqis since the U.S. is the only state in the world which boasts of sizable and immoral nature of its crimes against other nations.

U.S. history teems with crimes ranging from U.S. support and protection of corrupt dictatorial regimes, encouraging military coups, life attempts against some prominent patriotic leaders of the third world countries to change their government.

Therefore, the statement of William Perry is not something new, but what is unusual in the statement of the U.S. official is the lack of any sense of decency in that the statement indicates total U.S. disregard and contempt to UN Charter that prohibits the intervention by a UN member-sate into internal affairs of another.

If there are some rulers in the region whose stay in power depends on U.S. support and protection this is because these rulers lack the support of their own peoples.

And in the case of Iraq, U.S. policy-makers should have drawn the right conclusions from past experiences that they are dealing with a leader that is firmly committed to patriotic and pan-Arab principles the (?dictate) of which is to ensure Iraq's independence and its free political choice at any price.

The Iraqi leader, unlike some other regional regimes, is safely entrenched depending on the popular support he enjoys from the vast majority of Iraqi and Arab peoples. This was clearly demonstrated during the U.S.-led aggression on Iraq when Arab masses took to the streets in support of Iraq.

Since the Iraqi leader enjoys a strategic vision and work according to well-planned program he has managed to confront the U.S. onslaught and contain its aftermath. This is in no way an ordinary achievement, rather, it is a historic achievement that earned him the respect of Iraqis as well as popular Arab masses.

The power-base of the Iraqi leader hinges on the broad support of Iraqis and their Arab brothers, the party faithfuls of the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party (ABSP), the valiant Iraqi Armed Forces and the loyalty of the security and intelligence services of the state.

Therefore, the U.S. has to deal with Iraq: Either pursue the current futile and mean approach whereby it is trying to inflict utmost damage on the lives of the weak segments of the society, namely the children, the sick, the have-nots or try to build normal relation with Iraq under the leadership of President Saddam Husayn who does not need their fleets or economic aids to keep him in power like the case with some puppet regimes in the region.

And once again comes the conclusions that Iraqis know for sure that time is in their favor and justice on their side. They will never be disheartened by the use of media and psychological warfare.

Iraq: Writer Mocks Perry's 'Hallucinations' on Changing 'System'

JN1402193596 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 11 Feb 96 p 3

[From the "Windows" column by Diya' Hasan: "Perry's Statements; Exposed Dreams"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent statements by William Perry, defense secretary of William Clinton, in which he said that the U.S. Administration seeks to topple the ruling system in Iraq have prompted political commentators — who heard these statements before others — to make jokes. The reason for this is not because Perry spelled out a new position, but rather because he insisted on repeating talk about a U.S. intention, the hostility of which was exposed by the Iraqis. The Iraqis confronted this position with various shows of defiance, the latest of which was the Iraqis' free election of leader Saddam Husayn as president of their republic and pledging allegiance to him.

The same commentators unanimously agreed that this talk was nothing more than a desperate attempt, because Perry's hidden dreams failed to see the light, given the steadfastness of the Iraqis and the solidity of their homeland's front. Thus, he resorted to announcing his dreams and illusions in public with the aim of dispelling the Iraqis' euphoria resulting from the significant thaw which promises a bigger and early breakthrough. The reason why jokes are made about Perry's statements is that they were made at a time when logic stipulates that the American hostility will do away with him and with his aides in the region, just as it did away with Dick Cheney, who launched an extermination war against the Iraqis. This war failed and he and his masters went away and Iraq and its people remained armed like their leader. Perry's hallucinations are sheer exposed dreams.

Iraq: Columnist—U.S. Wants To Continue 'Milking' Gulf States

JN1402212496 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 8 Feb 96 p 3

["Sidelines" column by Sabri Hammadi: "So That They May Continue Their Milking and Occupation"]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. officials have shamelessly continued to speak of an "Iraqi threat" or an "Iraqi danger" to the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf states. Clinton, Christopher, William Perry, Al Gore, and Albright did so in the past. William Perry did so again on 6 February. Moreover, General Stephen Wright, official in charge of the so-called military cooperation office of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait, has made statements to this effect. THE NEW YORK TIMES also published similar information and commentaries last week.

We are not amazed or surprised by the fact that U.S. officials have repeatedly made such false and ridiculous claims, because we are certain that they are trying to scare and frighten the Arabian Gulf states about Iraq's intentions. They are doing so to perpetuate the U.S. military occupation of several of these states and maintain the exploitation of their resources until the last petrodollar, as is happening with the Kuwaiti and Saudi regimes.

The Americans tend to step up their talk about an alleged Iraqi danger whenever they feel that there are Gulf moves toward normalizing and improving relations with Iraq. It goes without saying that the normalization of ties between Iraq and the Arabian Gulf states would nullify the need for a U.S. military presence in the region and bring a halt to the U.S. milking operation. The United States does not want either of the two to happen.

U.S. officials are not ashamed of lying or blackmailing the Gulf states publicly. It is worth noting that several Arabian Gulf states have begun to realize the falsehood of these U.S. claims about an alleged Iraqi danger. They are aware of the U.S. motives behind these falsehoods and statements, particularly since experience has tangibly shown that Iraq is the real defender of Arabism of the Gulf and of the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf states. As for foreign powers, they are only interested in promoting their colonial interests.

Iraq: KDP, PUK Reportedly at Odds Over UN Talks

MM1502141396 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 15 Feb 96 pp 1, 6

[Report by Kamran Qurrah Daghi: "New York Oil Talks Provoke Tension Among Iraqi Kurds"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] London — Adham Barzani, leader of [Kurdish] Revolutionary Hizballah, has urged "a people's Islamic revolution, which Iraqi Kurdistan needs." While the oil talks between Iraq and the United Nations in New York have provoked tension between the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] (led by Mas'ud Barzani) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] (led by Jalal Talabani) over ways of distributing food supplies in the event of the negotiations' success. [passage omitted]

Kurdish sources have said that the New York talks between Iraq and the United Nations have provoked new tension between the Barzani and Talabani parties. The former has called for forming a committee comprised of UN representatives and Kurds from the areas not under the Baghdad regime's control to supervise the distribution of the humanitarian aid to be bought by the international organization from the oil revenues when an agreement is reached on the implementation of Resolution 986. As for Talabani's party, it has demanded that the committee include representatives from the United Nations and the government of Iraqi Kurdistan, which the KDP believes no longer exists since Iraqi Kurdistan's partition into two zones of influence for the two parties.

Meanwhile, Barzani's party has praised "the Iraqi delegation's flexibility over ways of implementing Resolution 986 and over some of the clauses opposed by the Iraqi side for some time." He added: "Our Kurdish people received the news about the negotiations and the positive change in prices (following the improvement in the dinar's value) with great happiness, which they expressed in various ways." Talabani's party attacked Iraqi measures, and Kusret Rasul, member of its Political Bureau and "prime minister of the province," stressed that the blockade imposed on the Kurdish areas has recently been toughened rather than eased.

In another development, Arab and Kurdish opposition sources have told AL-HAYAH that Washington could resume its efforts soon to resolve the dispute between the Talabani and Barzani parties, which have submitted to the Americans their amendments to the draft agreement prepared by Washington and Ankara at the Dublin reconciliation meeting last August.

Iraq: Spokesman Condemns Kurdish Delegation's Visit to Iran

JN1502123196 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1134 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 15 Feb (INA)—A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry made a statement on the visit to Iran by a delegation representing a number of agent Kurdish organizations at the invitation of the Iranian Government to attend the celebrations of the so-called victory of the Islamic revolution.

The spokesman said that the agent organizations' delegation held talks with a number of Iranian Government officials and that the Iranian authorities gave the delegation's visit extensive media coverage highlighting Iran's alleged role in establishing peace in northern Iraq and bragging about its false concern about the peace and security of the Iraqi Kurds.

The spokesman stressed that Iraq had condemned such contacts and invitations from the Iranian Government to such organizations and individuals who are responsible for the abnormal situation in northern Iraq.

The spokesman said that Iraq had repeatedly stressed that such actions reflect Iran's insistence on interfering in Iraq's domestic affairs and encouraging those cliques to persist in their criminal practices and suspect contacts and to spread a state of instability in northern Iraq.

Concluding his statement, the spokesman said: Reiterating its condemnation of those contacts, the government of the Republic of Iraq calls on the Iranian Government to stop and give up the deviant means and methods which severely harm relations between the two countries.

Iraq: Kurdish Opposition Leader Reportedly Assassinated

LD1502140796 Tehran IRNA in English
1143 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanandaj, Kordestan Prov., Feb. 15, IRNA — A member of the Central Committee of Kurdistan Social Democratic Party of Iraq was shot dead by unidentified assailants in a district of Sulaymaniyah Tuesday, reported Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) radio on Thursday. The radio monitored here, added that Salam Raouf along with two of his bodyguards and a shopkeeper were killed in the attack.

Terming Raouf's ties with KDP as close, the radio condemned the assassination and called for the arrest and prosecution of those responsible.

Sulaymaniyah has come under the control of the forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), led by Jalal Talebani, since clashes flared up between the two rival parties.

Meanwhile, PUK radio today broadcast statements of the political bureau and some officials of the union expressing sorrow over the incident. The radio did not elaborate further on the assassination.

Israel: Baraq on Palestinian State, Delay in Permanent Stage Talks

TA1402200196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq is opposed to changing the Labor Party platform and deleting from it the clause negating the establishment of a Palestinian state. According to him, the political solution should create a linkage between the Jordanian monarchy and the Palestinian entity.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz adds that Minister Baraq speaks of an expanded Alon Plan whereby an absolute majority of the Israeli settlements in Judaea and Samaria would be under Israel's rule even in the context of the permanent arrangement.

Replying to a question by our correspondent, Minister Baraq estimated that because of the early elections, the beginning of the negotiations on the permanent arrangement between Israel and the Palestinians scheduled to start in May may be delayed. In his opinion, the Palestinians will understand this and will want to start the negotiations after the next government is formed.

To the question of whether there is room for a referendum about the permanent arrangement with the Palestinians, Baraq said that the negotiations will take a long time and that, consequently, this is a hypothetical question.

Israel: Settlers, PA Said To Confer on Final Accord

TA1502055596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A day of protest has been declared by Palestinians in the territories. They are protesting against Jewish settlements and land expropriation by Israel. A Qol Yisra'el reporter says that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has decided to call upon countries which support the peace process to intervene, to halt settlement and land expropriation by Israel.

Meanwhile, a report in the settlement magazine NEQUDA says that members of the Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza Settlement Council met recently with members of the PA to discuss the future of the territories and the permanent settlement. The report said the Palestinians hinted that most of the settlements would remain under Israeli sovereignty.

Israel: Party Official Believes Peres Not Against Palestinian State

TA1502080296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 15 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Senior Labor Party officials yesterday assessed that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will be unable to prevent the Palestinians from establishing an independent state if they decide to do so during the permanent arrangement negotiations. The sources say that while publicly Peres is saying Israel would prefer a Palestinian-Jordanian confederation, in private talks he is saying that if Jordan's King Husayn prefers the establishment of a Palestinian state to a confederation, he will remove his opposition to this.

While Peres' media adviser 'Aliza Goren denied this report, a senior Labor official yesterday said he has heard Peres himself speaking to that effect.

Against this background the debate in Labor about the possibility of annulling the Labor platform clause rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state has heated up. The initiative to annul the clause is spearheaded by Ministers Yosi Beilin and Hayim Merom; Hagay Merom, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee; and Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English at 0500 GMT on 15 February adds: "Labor and Social Affairs Minister Ora Namir said she would support the establishment of a Palestinian state so long as Israel's security is secured."]

Israel: 'Secret' Document Notes Expanding PA Activity in Jerusalem

TA1502100296 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 15 Feb 96 p 16

[Report by Itamar Eichner]

[FBIS Translated Text] A secret document drafted in the Jerusalem municipality reveals that the Palestinian Authority [PA] has significantly expanded its political activities in the city, in violation of the Oslo agreements; plans a massive construction drive in East Jerusalem; and intends to launch a serious struggle against the construction of Jewish neighborhoods on Arab lands.

The document, obtained by YEDI'OT AHARONOT, also reveals that the Palestinian shadow municipality, which was disbanded after the Six-Day War, has resumed activity upon explicit PA instruction. Members of this shadow municipality (the Al-Quds Covenant), headed by Dr. Amin al-Majaj, have recently represented "the Palestinian capital" in the conference of Islamic capitals in Morocco and obtained funds for the reconstruction of buildings in the Muslim Quarter in East Jerusalem near the al-Aqsa Mosque.

The document also provides new information on activities by the PA Local Authority and Municipal Affairs Ministry, headed by Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat. The ministry has established a new technical unit for Jerusalem affairs that will deal exclusively with planning and construction work in Jerusalem "to establish the Arab nature of Jerusalem and guard the integrity of its lands, as well as to develop residential neighborhoods while considering Jerusalem's cultural, administrative, and religious status." The unit is supposed to provide housing solutions for Palestinians in the city.

The document adds that, contrary to the Oslo accords, other PA ministries have been intensively dealing with Jerusalem affairs, including the Education, Youth and Sports, Economy and Trade, and Tourism Ministries.

The document also reveals that, after the PA Council elections, council members from the Jerusalem District held several meetings in which they discussed, among other things, ways to struggle against the construction of the Har Homa Jewish neighborhood in southern Jerusalem. They decided that the Palestinians will pressure Arab Knesset members and foreign consulates in the city in a bid to gain their influence on the issue. It has been further decided that the Palestinians should alert public opinion through strikes and mass rallies.

Senior Jerusalem municipality sources said yesterday that Israeli intelligence and political elements have been made aware of the content of the document. "There are gross violations of the agreement on the Jerusalem issue. It seems that the Palestinians have started a real war for the city, and have taken off the kid gloves in preparation for the negotiations on the permanent arrangement. Israel must take immediate action to set them straight and make it clear to them that the PA may not operate in our capital," a city source said.

Israel: New Death Threats Against Government Leaders

TA1402152196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Shin Bet and Israel Police have recently received a new wave of death threats against the prime minister and Ministers Shahal and Sarid. Our correspondents Yo'el Nir and Shlomo Raz report that this time, the perpetrators cite the previous family names of the ministers [before they changed them into Hebrew names].

Israel: Settler Spokesman Denies Existence of Anti-Peres Document

TA1502071896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Aharon Domb, spokesman of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza, unequivocally denies that the council has accepted any document recommending personal accusations against Shim'on Peres in the framework of its election campaign. Domb told Qol Yisra'el that such a document does not exist. He said that two and a half weeks ago the council determined its basic positions for election campaigning, and these do not include direct activity against Shim'on Peres. He added, moreover, that any such activity would be improper.

Israel: Peres Asks Darawshah To Relay Message to Yemeni President

TA1402200896 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres asked Knesset Member 'Abd-al-Wahhab Darawshah to relay a message to the president of Yemen saying that Israel is not involved in the territorial dispute between Yemen and Eritrea in the Horn of Africa. Peres also asked Darawshah to propose to President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih to meet with him, preferably in Jordan. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that Darawshah, who will leave for Yemen in about one and a half weeks, will be the first Israeli to openly visit that country.

Israel: Peres Meets With EU Delegtion

TA1402165996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leadership of the EU, known as the troika, met in Jerusalem today with Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and reported to him on their talks yesterday with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. The delegation included the foreign ministers of Italy, Spain, and Ireland, along with the representative of the EU commissioner. They told Peres that President al-Asad is very open about the chances of peace. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin recording] [Ze'ev] The Prime Minister's Office says Shim'on Peres welcomed the EU efforts in the Middle East and said there are three main regional issues which need attention: the water problem; the development of an energy infrastructure; and tourism projects. On water, Peres assured the visiting troika

Israel would not endanger the existing sources. The prime minister recommended that the EU leadership meet with the Americans to coordinate positions on assisting the Middle East and the peace process.

After the meeting, Peres said he was told by the members of the troika delegation that Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad expressed appreciation for Israel's desire to reach a peace agreement. The delegation came to Israel from Syria. Italian Foreign Minister Susanna Agnelli:

[Agnelli] We were very pleased to understand that President al-Asad was, this time, very open to negotiations with Israel and also very pleasant toward the whole Israeli attitude for the peace process.

[Ze'ev] Israel's chief negotiator with the Syrians, Uri Savir, says he does not expect a breakthrough before the elections in Israel but that the early ballot will not necessarily hurt the talks.

[Savir] Well, I do not perceive any breakthroughs in the three months to come. I am not sure that breakthroughs would have been possible in these three months. I think it is actually, in a way, healthy for the negotiations to be able to concentrate on the issues themselves, to do it quietly, far from the limelight. Then, if we make the necessary progress, to see an intensification based on some conceptual basis that we hope to achieve.

[Ze'ev] On whether the question of who Israel's prime minister will be come June is a destabilizing force in the negotiations, Savir replied: Apparently, President al-Asad does not think so, and that is the main thing. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Rejects Moledet Request To Join Likud-Tzomet List

TA1402152296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu has turned down a request from Moledet leader Rehav'am Ze'evi to include him in the joint Likud-Tzomet list. Netanyahu told Ze'evi that such a move is impossible because the Likud and Tzomet oppose the idea of a population transfer.

Our correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that Netanyahu stated earlier that the upcoming elections will constitute a referendum on the Golan, thus reacting to the prime minister's remarks that he will subject the peace agreement with Syria to a referendum.

Israel: Labor Reportedly Considers Evacuation of Jordan Rift Valley

TA1402130196 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 14 Feb 96 p A1

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Labor plans to include in its platform prior to the elections a clause permitting the evacuation of Israeli settlements from the Jordan Rift Valley. The party conference at which the platform will be approved will convene on 25 April.

Labor is currently holding initial deliberations in unofficial forums on the wording of the platform. Among other things, it is studying the possibility of inserting a clause that declares the Jordan Rift Valley a military area under Israeli control. This formulation raises the possibility of evacuating settlements. Labor is also discussing the possibility of repealing the clause in the previous platform that rejects the possibility of a Palestinian state.

Labor Secretary General Nisim Zvili said yesterday that there is no certainty that the Jordan Rift Valley settlements will remain where they are under a permanent settlement with the Palestinians. Nevertheless, he stressed that the valley would not be transferred to the Palestinian Authority [PA] and would remain under Israeli control even in a permanent settlement. It is possible that the valley will remain a purely military area as part of Israel's eastern border, without civilian settlements.

In an interview to HA'ARETZ, Zvili said he does not think that the Jordan Rift Valley settlements must be included within the red lines Israel will fight for in the negotiations on the permanent settlement because they do not contribute to security. He explained that it will be easier for the Palestinians to accept the noninclusion of the valley within the PA if it becomes a military zone under Israel's control without civilian settlements.

Zvili said the Jordan Rift Valley has 20 settlements which house only 3,500 of the approximately 140,000 Jews who live on the West Bank. In his view, it will possible to evacuate the settlers to settlement blocs beyond the Green Line which Jerusalem will demand be annexed to Israel in the negotiations on the permanent settlement with the PA. In Zvili's view, over 70 percent of the West Bank settlers can be congregated in three settlement blocs: in the Ari'el area, the 'Etzyon bloc, and Jerusalem.

He also said that Labor will not include detailed maps in its platform but will stress the main outline of the permanent settlement map on which Israel will insist in the negotiations: nonreturn to the 1967 borders; a united Jerusalem; the Jerusalem environs; the 'Etzyon bloc; the Ari'el area; and the Jordan Rift Valley under Israeli control, with the Jordan River remaining Israel's security border to the east and no foreign army between the river and the sea.

Zvili said that at the party conference he will support a proposal to abrogate the clause rejecting the establishment of a Palestinian state. He noted that this does not necessarily mean that Labor would thereby be supporting the establishment of a Palestinian state and added that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres prefers a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

A senior Labor official said that in internal discussions it transpires that Peres is inclined to accept a solution that would be acceptable to King Husayn. If the monarch supports the establishment of a Palestinian state instead of a confederation, then Peres might lift his opposition to a Palestinian state on the West Bank. [passage omitted]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1100 GMT on 14 February reports that "Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has said that there is no intention of evacuating settlements in the Jordan Rift Valley and asserted that the Jordan River will remain Israel's security border." Reacting to the HA'ARETZ report, "the prime minister said it was baseless."]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1105 on 14 February reports that Zvili "made it clear that the Labor platform will include no clauses regarding the evacuation of settlements in the Jordan Rift Valley." In a recorded passage, Zvili says: "I said that in its new platform, Labor will discuss drawing red lines regarding the policy that will guide the agreement that will outline the permanent solution between us and the Palestinians. I pointed out the four red lines: no return to the 1967 borders; united Jerusalem as Israel's capital; no right of return to Israeli territory; and I also said that we will insist that the Jordan River remain our security border. The important thing is that the Jordan River be the security border on our eastern front. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will be present there with military force, and no foreign army will be stationed between the Jordan River and the sea. This is the red line. As for the issue of settlement evacuations, there will be no clause in the Labor platform that will speak of evacuating settlements."]

Jordan: Kuwaiti Crown Prince Conveys 'Positive Response' on Ties

JN1402165396 Amman PETRA-JNA in Arabic 1555 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, 14 Feb (PETRA)—His Highness Crown Prince Hasan today received Dr. Muhammad al-Rumayhi, special envoy of Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, crown prince of fraternal Kuwait.

Dr. al-Rumayhi conveyed a written message from his brother Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, Kuwaiti crown prince and prime minister.

The JORDANIAN NEWS AGENCY, PETRA, learned that Shaykh Sa'd's message to his brother Prince Hasan included a positive response by Kuwait to the Jordanian desire and efforts of His Majesty King Husayn on restoring fraternal relations between the two sisterly states and overcoming the stage resulting from the Iraqi occupation of the fraternal State of Kuwait.

His Highness Shaykh Sa'd emphasized to Prince Hasan that the foundations have been laid for making practical steps toward the restoration of normal bilateral relations in an atmosphere of fraternal dialogue, thanks to the initiative of Prince Hasan.

Shaykh Sa'd hailed the political trends of sisterly Jordan which is working to restore the fraternal image to Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations and to enhance joint Arab action.

Prince Hasan and his brother Shaykh Sa'd exchanged a number of messages during the blessed month of Ramadan that were characterized with frankness, fraternity, and clarity, and reflected the desire to enhance the fraternal spirit in the bilateral fraternal relations.

Jordan: Paper Welcomes Breakthrough in Kuwaiti Ties

JN1502120396 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 15 Feb 96 pp 1, 20

[Editorial: "A Breakthrough in Jordanian-Kuwaiti Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The message that His Highness Crown Prince Hasan received from his brother Kuwaiti Crown Prince and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah and what this message contained in terms of frankness, brotherliness, and clarity is an important positive development in the course of Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations — relations which remained in a state of stalemate and regression throughout the past five years.

Perhaps the most important content of the message by Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah is Kuwait's response to Jordan's desire and His Majesty King Husayn's efforts to restore brotherly relations between the two fraternal countries to normal, and thus overcome all the repercussions of the stage following Iraq's occupation of the State of Kuwait.

There is no doubt that Jordan welcomes, on both the official and popular levels, such a long-awaited positive development. This is because fraternal Kuwait has a special place in the hearts of Jordanians. The Kuwaitis continue to be dear brothers, whose pain and joy we share and for whom we wish security, progress, and stability.

It was illogical to keep Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations forever governed by the repercussions of that painful stage of this nation's life. It was also illogical for all of us to keep dwelling on the past, letting doubts get the better of factors of agreement, and letting misunderstanding undermine bilateral interests and indeed higher pan-Arab interests, which are the focal point of all regional stands and policies.

We welcome this important positive move within the framework of Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations and we see it as a response to the interests of both fraternal countries and peoples. We also hope that such an important political breakthrough will be a prelude to the restoration of diplomatic relations and after that relations of joint cooperation between Jordan and Kuwait — relations founded on bases that are firmer and more capable of absorbing and benefiting from the lessons of the past.

Jordan: al-Kabariti—Trade Cuts with Iraq Purely Economic

JN1502103296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 15-16 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Sa'ida Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The government's decision to cut the volume of trade with Iraq by 50 percent was based on economic and fiscal considerations, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said Wednesday [14 February].

"It is an economic decision based on an in-depth study that was aimed at putting an end to the accumulation of the debt burden on the Kingdom," said Mr. al-Kabariti at Wednesday's Lower House of Parliament session.

The premier was replying to a question by leftist Deputy Khalil Haddadin on the government's policy towards trade with Iraq and its influences on the local market. Mr. Haddadin contended that the government's decision to lower the volume of trade with Iraq by 50 percent was inconsistent with the country's policies that encouraged Jordanian industries to depend on the Iraqi market.

"The government's decision deals a deadly blow to our economy and our industry in particular, in addition to the additional burden on the already high percentage of unemployment in the labour workforce," said Deputy Haddadin, who has very close ties to the ruling Ba'th Party in Iraq. Jordan should consider "the suffering of the Iraqi people," he said.

Mr. al-Kabariti said that the decision was a "pure economic decision. The House's Finance Committee and any other party could study this issue at length" if they liked.

Also at Wednesday's session, Islamic Action Front Deputy Hamzah Mansur called on the House to take quick action to denounce the U.N. Security Council decision to condemn Sudan for failing to hand over three suspects to Ethiopia in the assassination attempt on the life to Egyptian President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa last year.

"Despite the firm stand that Sudan expressed at the unofficial meeting of the U.N. Security Council, especially that it condemns all forms of terrorism and that it had no intention to provide any support to terrorist activities... despite all of the assurances and the flexibility of the Sudanese leadership, the American Administration insisted on issuing a U.N. resolution accusing Sudan of terrorism."

"This decision has been followed by other procedures mainly the withdrawal of U.S. embassy staff from Khartoum and the issue of warnings to Americans not to travel to Sudan. This is unjust and unfair," Deputy Mansur, the IAF bloc's spokesperson said.

"I call on the House to condemn the decision and to call the Arab Parliamentary Union for an urgent session," stressed Mr. Masur.

Jordan: King To Visit Egypt for Bilateral, Regional Talks

JN1402122996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (J.T.)—His Majesty King Husayn will pay a visit to Cairo on Thursday for talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak on bilateral and pan-Arab affairs and issues of common interest, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, announced Tuesday.

Commenting on the visit Minister of Information Marwan al-Muashshir said that the King's visit is very important in view of the developments in the region which require constant consultations and coordination between the two countries.

He said that Jordan's relations with Israel which are governed by a treaty and bilateral agreements can by no means be maintained at the expense of the Kingdom's relations with the Arab states.

Referring to the King's visit to Saudi Arabia, Dr. al-Muashshir said that Jordan is deeply gratified over the visit because he said it had turned a new page in bilateral relations. He said that the visit was marked by openness and frankness and that the two sides were determined to prevent anything from disturbing bilateral relations in the future.

On relations with Kuwait the minister expressed Jordan's hope that further steps would be taken towards improving relations with the emirate and all the Gulf states.

Egyptian Ambassador to Jordan Wajih Hamdi said in a statement to the AL-ASWAQ daily this week that the visit was in the framework of consultations and coordination between the two sides on Arab, regional and international developments and the peace process.

All issues of common concern will be discussed at the meeting which is expected to yield positive results, Mr. Hamdi said.

According to Mr. Hamdi the two leaders will discuss a date for a meeting of the Higher Joint Jordanian-Egyptian Committee which was put off due to the change of government in Jordan. Also on the agenda are means to stimulate bilateral trade and the sale of Egyptian gas to Jordan in addition to the reduction of tariffs on Jordanian and Egyptian goods arriving through the Suez Canal and al- 'Aqabah port.

In addition, he said, the two leaders would discuss the sufferings of the Iraqi people and the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations.

Mr. Hamdi said that Jordan's relations with Egypt were strong and could not be affected by past differences. He said that any attempt to raise contradictions between Egyptian and Jordanian roles in the Middle East would be like fishing in muddy waters because rivalry between the two countries was nonexistent. He said that the two countries' relations and roles complement one another.

Jordan: Convicted Spy for Israel Gets Life Sentence

JN1502111096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 15, 16 Feb 96 p 3

[Report by Rana al-Husayni]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The State Security Court last week sentenced a 45-year-old man to life imprisonment with hard labour for espionage. Muhammad Ahmad 'Uwaynah, who pleaded innocent, was found guilty of leaking top secret military information to Israel since 1960.

Muhammad Duwayk, the attorney for the defence, told the JORDAN TIMES Wednesday [14 February] that he was not appealing the verdict "because the prosecution had strong compelling evidence" to indict his client.

According to court documents, 'Uwaynah met with an agent who worked for the Israeli Secret Intelligence Service, the Mossad, in 1960. The court said that the agent convinced 'Uwaynah to join the Mossad to spy on Palestinian commandos in 1970 and the Jordan Armed Forces in 1992.

The prosecution said that 'Uwaynah was asked by the Mossad to obtain top secret military information regarding the Kingdom's armed forces. It said 'Uwaynah befriended a sergeant in the Jordanian army in 1990 whom he tricked into obtaining top secret military information. The sergeant became suspicious of 'Uwaynah and informed the concerned authorities, the prosecution said.

In his confession to the court, 'Uwaynah, who was apprehended on 10 November 1994, said the Mossad took advantage of his difficult financial situation, as he was unable to obtain a degree, and convinced him to join them.

The court's decision will be automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation next month. In light of the extenuating circumstances that have resulted from removing Israel from the list of enemy states, the sentence was reduced from death to life imprisonment.

Jordan: Shubaylat Case Said Proceeding According to Law

JN1402200096 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 96 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman (Petra)—Minister of Justice 'Abd-al-Karim al-Dughmi Tuesday said the case of Jordan Engineers Association (JEA) President Layth Shubaylat, currently under detention awaiting trial for allegedly slandering Their Majesties King Husayn and Queen Nur and HRH Crown Prince Hassan, is being dealt with by court according to Jordanian law.

Following a meeting with Vice-President of the Jordan Bar Association (JBA) Ziyad al-Khasawinah in the presence of Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and former JBA president Kamal Nasir who is now minister of social development, Mr. al-Dughmi said there are no violations of regular court procedures in the case.

Mr. al-Dughmi said the prime minister's meeting with Mr. al-Khasawinah "was a translation of the royal letter of designation" to Mr. al-Kabariti's government, stressing that the government is serious in being open to associations and hearing all views. He said the government will hear and study all the JBA's demands.

Mr. al-Khasawinah, meanwhile, stressed the need to amend the association's bylaws and finding means to reduce unemployment among lawyers.

He also highlighted the importance of safeguarding democracy and protecting public freedoms.

On Friday, about 12,600 engineers are expected to cast ballots in the elections of the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), and association sources said that incumbent president Layth Shubaylat stands a good chance of retaining his seat.

The engineers, expected to vote in Amman, Irbid al-Karak, Ma'an al-Zarqa' and al-'Aqabah will elect a president, vice president and council members.

In all, eight candidates are running for president, six for vice president and 17 for seats on the JEA council.

JEA sources said that Shubaylat has a good chance to win the majority of votes as president of the association.

Among those running for the vice presidency are members of the Islamic Action Front, and according to the JEA law the council has the power to elect the vice president as president if the latter's seat remains vacant.

The association groups nearly 30,000 registered engineers but only those who had paid their subscription fees to the association for 1996 and the previous years will be able to vote in the coming election.

According to a Professional Association Complex source the elections will be held if there is a quorum otherwise another round will be held next Friday.

The engineers were given 15 days between Jan 16 and Feb 8 to pay their subscription fees to the association's secretariat in order to be come eligible for voting.

Engineer Mansur Shammut has been appointed head of a higher central committee for the elections which will be convened in Amman.

Jordan: Information Minister Reveals New Policy

JN1402190996 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 14 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman—The Ministry of Information will be abolished and press-related laws will be amended to enhance freedoms and protect journalists from persecution, Minister of Information Marwan al-Mu'ashshir said Tuesday.

In a meeting with the president and members of Jordan Press Association (JPA), Dr. al-Mu'ashshir announced a new comprehensive information policy that would result in the creation of an autonomous radio and television entity and would turn the state-owned Petra news agency into a semi-governmental agency.

The government's strategy, aimed at strengthening freedoms but also raising the level of responsibility among media men and women, will first begin with amending the press laws, the 1993 press and publications law in particular.

The law has been highly criticised by international human rights organisations for its long list of items that journalists are prohibited to write on including information on security forces unless authorised; writings that harm national unity; articles or news that shake the confidence in the national currency; articles or information that imply insult to leaders of Arab, Muslim or friendly countries and reports that do not conform with general ethics and societal morals.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir pledged that the ministry would not be party to legal persecution or harassment of journalists and said that courts will be the final arbiter in all cases filed against journalists.

The JPA temporary law, considered by many journalists as hindering the profession, was also tackled during the meeting. JPA President Sulayman al-Qudah said the association was working on modifying the law (of 1983) and the amendments introduced to it in 1989. But he regretted that the draft, presented to the Lower House of Parliament in 1990, has not been discussed since.

The House's Judiciary Committee will start discussing the law Saturday. The association declared last week its intention of introducing further amendments to the draft to go in line with the democratic process and the government's directives, Mr. al-Qudah said.

"I asked the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, 'Abd-Ra'uf al- Rawabidah, to postpone discussions until after al-Fitr feast, but he said it was not possible," Mr. al-Qudah told the JORDAN TIMES.

Mr. al-Qudah said the association's council will meet today to discuss the needed amendments to forward its propositions to the House but regretted that this process necessitated more time.

According to Samir al-Hiyari head of the JPA Freedoms Committee, the amendments will mainly deal with changing the criteria for JPA membership.

In the current law, to qualify for membership journalists should be on the payroll of a reconsigned press establishment and should have a certain degree of education coupled with a period of work experience. Freelance journalists, correspondents of foreign agencies and newspapers as well as journalists working in political party newspapers, journalists and anchors at Jordan radio and television, and some columnists are not and could not become members. Non-members are not recognised as journalists, according to the law.

Mr. al-Qudah said new changes will be made to enable all journalists who wish to join to become members.

Not only press related laws will be amended, but also major changes in the information milieu will be carried out. An administrative board will preside over the Radio and TV Corporation and the government will have a share in the new establishment. The Press and Publications Department would be restructured and an opinion poll unit will be established, the minister said.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, will be transformed into a corporation as is the case with international news agencies.

The ministry, before its abolition, will maintain regular contacts with journalists. There will be regular press briefings after every Cabinet meeting and meetings with information minister and other Cabinet members every week and when there is need, the minister stressed.

The need for a code of honour was also discussed at the meeting with the minister pointing to the importance of the journalists' efforts in this domain. Dr. al-Muashshir said he was asked by His Majesty King Husayn on whether journalists, who promised the King in a meeting in December to chart the code in one month, have done so. They did not, he was told.

Also discussed during the meeting was the need for the establishment of a press club and a new premise for the association.

"It was a very positive meeting," Mr. al-Qudah said.

Lebanon: Israeli Army Official Escapes Hizballah Attack

NC1402194396 Paris AFP in English 1850 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Marjayoun, Lebanon, Feb 14 (AFP) — Israel's deputy army chief-of-staff narrowly escaped a Hizballah rocket attack as he visited south Lebanon on Wednesday [14 February], an Israeli-backed militia said.

General Matan Vilnai was making an inspection tour of the Israeli-occupied "security zone" in south Lebanon when guerrillas fired a Sagger missile at his convoy of four cars, the South Lebanon Army (SLA) militia said. The rocket missed its target. But in Jerusalem, a military source said that the general had left the area before the rocket attack. Israeli state television, however, confirmed the SLA report.

The attack near Bayt Yahun in the central sector of the Israeli-occupied zone was claimed by the Shiite Moslem fundamentalist Hizballah, which said in a statement from Beirut that its guerrillas fired several rockets at the convoy. The SLA had said earlier that a Sagger missile had been fired at a militia position in the western sector of the zone without causing casualties.

Israel has around 1,000 soldiers permanently stationed in the border security zone, which it patrols along with the 3,000-strong SLA militia.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Attacks Senior Israeli Officer Convoy

NC1502085496 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Islamic Resistance mujahidin have carried out a daring operation in the Bayt Yahun area. They surprised the motorcade of the number two at the enemy Chief of Staff Command with the appropriate weapons. The operation reconfirms the Resistance men's accurate targeting and success in monitoring the movements of the enemy's senior military commanders. The operation also shows an ability to penetrate the security teams that usually accompany the motorcades of senior Zionist officers on their travels in the occupied area.

The Islamic Resistance yesterday afternoon targeted a motorcade of senior Zionist officers, including Deputy Chief of Staff Natan Vilnai, and Agent [South Lebanese Army, SLA] officers, including 'Aql Hashim, the Agent militia official in charge of the western sector. It fired rockets at a motorcade of four vehicles soon after the military official got out of a helicopter at post 17 in Bint Jubayl. It was confirmed that one vehicle was directly hit by a rocket. The Israeli forces cordoned off the area to prevent casualty information leaking. The enemy was confused, which was clear in contradictory statements by the Zionist sources. The enemy tried to black out news of the operation. [passage omitted]

The Islamic Resistance said it was marking the anniversary of the martyrdom of 'Abbas al-Musawi, martyr Shaykh Raghib Harb, and Jerusalem Day. Maintaining its constant monitoring of enemy movements, the Islamic Resistance earlier monitored the movement of the motorcade carrying enemy Chief of Staff Amnon Shahaq in Marj 'Uyun. The Islamic Resistance reasserted its capabilities with its surprise assault on the motorcade carrying the Zionist deputy chief of staff and his aides travelling on the Bayt Yahun road. A group of the Islamic Resistance launched a rocket attack on the motorcade, scoring a direct hit. The enemy brought in reinforcements, cordoned off the scenes, and raked nearby areas.

The Islamic Resistance statement vowed to continue its option of struggle to protect the homeland and its people until our land is liberated and the enemy and Agents are repulsed.

Earlier, Agent militiamen were killed or wounded when the Islamic Resistance's Martyr Muhammad Hamadah Abu-Salih Group detonated an explosive charge near an Agent patrol travelling on the Saydun road.

According to security sources, the Resistance men fired two rockets at an Israeli bulldozer at the al-Dabshah post, where work was continuing to fortify the post.

Early this morning Zionist helicopters raked the valleys near Bayt Yahun, Yatar, and the al-Tannuri valley west of the occupied village of Bayt Lif. Earlier, hostile forces at the Bayt Yahun post directed 81-mm mortar fire at the Haddatha Woods and the outskirts of Bra'shit. The Israeli forces at the Rshaf post raked the nearby valleys with machine guns. The Israeli forces also bombarded the outskirts of al-Qa'qa'iyah, the al-Litani River basin, and Wadi al-Hajar with 155-mm rounds yesterday afternoon. Earlier, the Israelis pounded the outskirts of the army's derelict barracks and Qasr Ghandur in al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: IDF Denies Reports of Attack on Israeli Convoy

TA1402194496 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Sources in SLA [South Lebanese Army] headquarters announced a short time ago that terrorists, apparently members of Hizballah, tried to lay ambush to a convoy in which Deputy Chief of Staff Matan Vilna'i was driving. Nobody was hurt. Sagger rockets were fired at the armored personnel carrier in which Vilna'i was driving near the village of Bayt Yahun in the central sector. One of the rockets exploded a few meters from the convoy, but Vilna'i — who, as mentioned, was not hurt — went ahead with his planned tour and met with Colonel Hakil Hashim, the SLA's intelligence chief.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 1900 GMT on 14 Feb reports: "The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman has denied news agency reports whereby a Sagger rocket exploded near a convoy carrying Deputy Chief of Staff Matan Vilna'i in south Lebanon. According to the IDF spokesman, the incident in question did not take place anywhere near General Vilna'i."]

Lebanon: Buwayz—U.S. Elections Put 'Pressure' on Peace

BR1502143496 Barcelona LA VANGUARDIA in Spanish 14 Feb 96 p 6

[Interview with Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz by Tomas Alcoverro in Beirut; date not given: "Israel Will Delay Peace Process for Two Months" — first paragraph is LA VANGUARDIA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut — In light of the official announcement of early elections in Israel, Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz maintained in statements made to LA VANGUARDIA on the eve of a visit to Madrid — where he will sign several bilateral agreements — that this will delay the pace of the peace process for two months, although the negotiations could gain a new impetus following the formation of a new government in the Jewish state. "Once the elections are over," this Arab republic's foreign minister said, "the Israeli Government will have a greater chance to adopt clearer and more definitive options. Although contacts between Syria's and Israel's delegations will continue, no result is expected during this time." For its part Lebanon has not yet resumed its suspended negotiation with its southern neighbor's representatives.

[Alcoverro] What influence could the coming U.S. elections have?

[Buwayz] They is a pressure factor for the progress of the peace negotiations, both on the Arab-Israeli conflict and on unblocking the situation in the Gulf region. The U.S. administration is very interested in encouraging and expediting these contacts.

[Alcoverro] According to Yasir 'Arafat, Israel has agreed that 300 Palestinian guerrillas in Lebanon should return to the autonomous territories. What is the reason for your government's silence on this matter?

[Buwayz] As you are very well aware, 350,000 refugees are still living on our national territory. Lebanon, which has never accepted or will accept their settlement, longs for their return to Palestine with all its heart. We have always encouraged the Palestinians' return to their places of origin, but the manner, the way in which they will be able to leave our country must now be clarified. For example, will they leave armed or unarmed? No PLO leader has visited us as yet to discuss this matter.

[Alcoverro] The interior minister has revealed that 4,000 Islamic militants based in Bosnia intend to come to Lebanon and that your country is about to be invaded by a wave of Muslim fundamentalism. What is your opinion?

[Buwayz] This fundamentalist phenomenon exists in many parts of the world. In Lebanon, since we have already suffered it for many years, we can deem ourselves more immune to its effects.

Lebanon: Israeli Shelling, 'Resistance' Operations Reported

NC1402172896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The occupation troops this afternoon shelled the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the deserted army barracks in al-Nabatiyah, the outskirts of Qasr Ghandur, the ridges of Frun, Zawtar al-Gharbiyah and Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, and the al-Litani river basin.

In response to the aggression, resistance groups targeted a patrol of the Lahd militia on Saydun road, inflicting many casualties. Amal has announced its responsibility for killing a member of the agent militia [South Lebanese Army] near 'Alman. Amal members also attacked the 'Alman and (al-Qufayr) positions, inflicting a number of casualties.

In another development, the UN Interim Force in Lebanon has strongly protested to the occupation troops after its position in Zibqin was targeted yesterday by a 155-mm shell, causing property damage.

Lebanon: Militiamen Reportely Desert, Join Hizballah

NC1402172996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] AFP has quoted Israeli military sources as saying that more than 200 members of the Agent Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army] have deserted the militia in the past two years. The same sources added that most of the deserters have joined Hizballah.

Lebanon: al-Hariri—Army To Deploy in South If Peace Achieved

NC1502075696 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At an iftar banquet at his home for Lebanese university students, Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri said he has no objection to any election law that is agreed upon. He said: I do not intend to agree to an extension of the current Chamber of Deputies' term. He stressed that the government must ultimately prepare a draft election law that considers the interests of the country and has as few objections as possible. He said the presence of the Syrian Army in Lebanon is the main reason for the stable civil peace in Lebanon. Syria is the only state to help Lebanon. He announced that the Lebanese Army will be deployed throughout the south if the peace talks with Israel yield positive results and if agreement is reached on peace between Lebanon and Israel. He expressed his hope that the Lebanese Army will do what he strives for. He highlighted his concern about the democratic system in Lebanon.

Prime Minister al-Hariri noted that demonstrations are approved within the law, providing the political authorities allow them. He said the executive authority has issued a decision banning strikes and demonstrations. He said: Strikes are a method of expression guaranteed by the Constitution. The political authority approves strikes and demonstrations, or does not, as the case may be, proceeding from the higher interests of the country.

Lebanon: Government Changes in Jordan Viewed

NC1402130896 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 14 Feb 96

[From the "A Pause With an Event" feature: "An Israeli Government in Jordan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] King Husayn's shrewdness in changing the direction of the ship is not new; it is not dictated by political circumstance or the atmosphere of reconciliation in the region. The Jordanian monarch has long pursued this political conduct. He was a partner of the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC], which included Iraq, Yemen, Egypt, and the PLO, when it was considered to be an organization for liberation. The ACC was the product of the king's philosophy. He saw Arab solidarity as a means to gain money and protect Jordan's economy from collapse and, consequently, raise the price of his throne in the barter market. Former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger invented this barter market in agreement with the former Zionist enemy, Foreign Minister Sharon.

Until recently the king was one of the advocates and hosts of Arab summits. Amman hosted two summits. Shortly after, and even during the aggressive war launched by the Iraqi regime against the nascent Islamic revolution in Iran, the Jordanian king was one of the most ardent and closest Arab supporters of Saddam Husayn in view of the benefit for Jordan from the arrogant Western capitals, which arrogantly sided with the aggressor. But Saddam led the second Gulf war against the Arab country that paid him approximately $20 billion during his aggression against Iran on the assumption that he would protect the Arabs from fundamentalism. The aggression against Kuwait immediately changed the West's view of Saddam Husayn. His majesty the king of Jordan had to ride the new Western horse to stab his former ally in the back. He went so far as to call for overthrowing the Iraqi regime by any means. He took part in concocting plots in coordination with the CIA and Western intelligence to replace Saddam, even with his defecting son-in-law.

When the king saw that it was in his interest to improve ties with Syria, he did not hesitate to do anything for that goal. But when there was no need or interest, he would boycott it and wade in the quagmire alone without his Syrian brothers' participation. Even his ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran were characterized by a fierce aggressive nature until the second Gulf war broke out, when he sought to ease tension with it. He sought to promote ties with Turkey. Perhaps he has begun to link himself with it in the plans that concern the future of the area if things proceed as the U.S. Administration desires—Middle Eastern market and water, political, security, and economic cooperation.

King Husayn's domestic policy is a reflection of his foreign policy, or vice versa. Enemy Israel has become fraternal Israel. Thus, it has become difficult to elicit the help of old leaders because they do not generally approve of making the Zionist entity a friend. The governments that were characterized by a national nature are no longer suitable for the present and the future. They must become part of the past. The governments that care about Arab coordination and solidarity do not fit the new stage. The reverse is true. The king wants governments, leaders, court officials, and intelligence officers who advocate coordination, cohesion, and brotherhood with the Zionist entity. Thus, he had to change the whole former team of leaders, who were brought up under the old Arab order. Jordan's participation in that order was only for form's sake and not substance. The change in Jordan was described as the greatest transformation in political action in

Jordan for the past 20 years. It affected most cabinet members as well as the royal court. Chief of the Royal Court Marwan al-Qasim's resignation was immediately accepted. Al-Qasim was replaced with Dr. 'Awni al-Khasawinah, the king's legal adviser. The resignations of the king's team of advisers were also accepted. Al-Khasawinah, a graduate of the British Cambridge University, is considered to be an expert in international law in Jordan and played a basic part in formulating the clauses of the reconciliation treaty with the Zionist entity.

The government is now led by former Foreign Minister 'Abd-al- Karim al-Kabariti, after former Prime Minister Zayd Bin-Shakir resigned and was given the title of prince. Al-Kabariti is well known for his deep inclination toward normalizing ties with the Zionist entity and considers this goal to be at the top of his political interests. In order to fulfill his desire to normalize ties with Israel, he held the foreign and defense portfolios along with his post as prime minister. Two ministers who played an important role in reconciliation with the enemy remain in the new cabinet. 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib, who supervised the arrangements for the Amman Economic Summit and the peddling of internal laws to suit the calls for openness and normalization, and Rima Khalaf, who assumed coordination of the Jordanian plans that were submitted to the economic summit.

The 'Abd-al-Salam government under King Husayn's sponsorship led Jordan toward signing reconciliation with Israel, the Zayd Bin- Shakir government led Jordan toward normalization, and the al- Kabariti government is leading Jordan toward final partnership with the enemy. Al-Kabariti will do all he can to lead and promote the transformation in favor of the alleged reconciliation, because the former government did not set this role, or rather, this role was not set for it. All members of the current cabinet were chosen to secure this takeoff away from domestic sensitivities and annoyances. A number of the ministers of the former cabinets refused to meet with their Zionist counterparts, something which was considered to be a sort of offense to Jordan's role. The new government is required to deal with 'Arafat's state without problems. Thus, it includes only two ministers who were born in the occupied Palestinian areas in 1948. The ethnic and religious minorities were treated in the same way as the deputies born in so-called Israel. The new cabinet includes three Christian ministers—Rima Khalaf, Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, and Samir Qa'war, and a Circasian minister Munir Subar. The rest come from Jordan's main clans that prevail in the big towns.

Noteworthy about the new government is that it rewarded the forces and personalities that supported the trend of reconciliation with the enemy. This applies to Prime Minister al-Kabariti himself, and to current Information Minister Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, who was ambassador to the Zionist entity, and to 'Ali Abu-al-Raghib, and Rima Khalaf. In addition to the change in the royal court, the government change was accompanied by important changes in the security department commands. King Husayn appointed Major General Samih al-Battikhi as director of the General Intelligence Directorate, succeeding Lieutenant General Mustafa al-Qaysi, who has been appointed the King's adviser for security affairs and rapporteur of the State Security Council. Also, the public security director was replaced and pensioned off.

These are the changes that occurred in Jordan recently. Everyone on the new team seeks the same goal. Since this goal has been one of total partnership with Israel, regardless of the other Arab countries, be they allies, approvers, or disapprovers of the settlement, can we not call the new government Jordan's Israeli government? Are not Jordan and Israel partners in making the future in the region and for Iraq, both politically and economically. So, why will the settlement not become real?

Syria: VP Khaddam Meets PFLP's Habash, Supports 'Struggle'

JN1402182596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam received Dr. George Habash, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], in Damascus today. Here is reporter Ghassan Salamah:

[Begin Salamah recording] Syria will gain nothing from its talks with Israel before early elections are held in late May because Israel has not presented withdrawal from the Golan at the negotiating table. Syria, which is also concerned about the requirements of the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, reiterates that the issue of peace and what it entails in terms of normalization and economic cooperation will only materialize in light of Israel's readiness to respond to the legitimate Arab, Syrian, and Lebanese demands.

Today's meeting of Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and PFLP Secretary General Dr. George Habash in Damascus falls within this framework. Habash reiterated the PFLP's rejection of attempts to amend the Palestinian National Charter by convening the Palestine National Council, which has not been convened in over four and a half years.

The Syrian vice president reaffirmed Syria's firm support for the Palestinian people's struggle to restore all their national rights, particularly the right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital. [end recording]

Syria: Daily Urges European Involvement in Peace Talks

JN1502085896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 15 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today, AL-THAWRAH discusses the European role in the peace process. It says: The European troika's visit to Damascus indicates there is a firm European conviction about the need to activate the peace process and provide the proper climate to ensure serious and fruitful negotiations, which can remove the obstacles to progress.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that this conviction did not emerge in a vacuum but was dictated by several political considerations. At the head of these considerations is the fact that continued stumbling in the talks will have negative repercussions that will threaten the interests of several states and peoples and possibly lead to the collapse of hope for peace, thus keeping the situation as bad and complicated as it is now.

AL-THAWRAH says: Naturally, Syria is not responsible for the current delay in the peace process. Syria has always voiced its readiness to establish full peace in return for full withdrawal. Israel alone is responsible for this delay because it has not announced that it is prepared to comply with the principle of complete withdrawal from the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon; because it always adopts evasive and obstructionist positions; and because it uses feeble and unfounded excuses to evade the basic obligations of peace.

AL-THAWRAH adds: These Israeli positions widened the gaps and prevented progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. Therefore, Europe and the world community in general must concentrate their efforts on Israel to persuade it to change its positions and to force it to accept withdrawal and the principle of equitable [mutakafi'] and parallel [mutawazi] security.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: If Israel really wants peace, that desire can only be translated into reality by offering the necessary requirements for peace, first of which is complete withdrawal and the return of territory and rights to their rightful owners.

Syria: Paper Previews Peace Talks With Israel

JN1502091196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0545 GMT 15 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial, AL-BA'TH discusses the upcoming round of peace talks. It stresses that the resumption of these talks is intended to achieve their objectives and that any attempt to abuse international legitimacy is doomed to fail.

The paper says: Those who have not learned the necessary lessons on the failure of the policies of regional expansion and annexation and on the failure of attempts to annul the other party, impose one's will by force, and use war and aggression to make gains at the expense of the others, will be held responsible.

AL-BA'TH says Syria has provided a new opportunity for the peace talks on the Syrian-Israeli track by returning to those talks. On several occasions, the U.S. sponsor — through President Bill Clinton — confirmed and reconfirmed its commitment to the peace process and its principles and objectives. Syria saw in this renewed commitment a proper ground for cooperation to make the peace process arrive at the agreed objective despite the changes that took place every now and then in the U.S. action and developments, which affected its speed and effectiveness.

The paper says Syria has sincerely and cooperatively offered what it can regarding the peace process, a fact that is confirmed by world public opinion and the U.S. sponsor. Syria will never offer anything that would infringe on its rights, interests, and national security, and it will not relinquish a speck of its soil. Syria is also certain that occupation will inevitably end, that its territory will be restored in full, and that the kind of peace it seeks will never be achieved at the expense of its people's national and pan- Arab dignity.

AL-BA'TH concludes: Syria expects the peace process sponsor, which reconfirmed its commitment to and support for the principles of the peace process and the resolutions of international legitimacy, to translate its adherence to the peace process and its bases into dynamic action and a force of persuasion on the party that has not yet abided by the requirements of the just and comprehensive peace, at the head of which is complete and full withdrawal. Israel is mistaken if it thinks that continuing on the course of extortion and bargaining will allow it to achieve anything at any stage. Syria rejects that method and holds Israeli rulers responsible for the consequences and effects it will have on the peace talks and the future of the peace process in the region.

Syria, Iraq Threaten Euphrates Dam Builders in Turkey

MM1402170196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
14 Feb 96 p 7

[Report by Ibrahim Humaydi in Damascus: "Syria and Iraq Warn European Companies Against Helping Turkey Build Euphrates Dam"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Syria and Iraq have threatened to take legal action, including filing compensation claims and staging boycotts, against European companies helping Turkey build the Birecik dam because "it harms" the two downstream states of the Euphrates, which runs through all three states.

The threat came at yesterday's closure of the Syrian-Iraqi Technical Committee's official sessions, which were chaired by Engineer Barakat Hadid, Syrian assistant irrigation minister, and 'Abd-al-Sattar Salman Husayn, under secretary of the Iraqi Irrigation Ministry.

Syrian sources told AL-HAYAH that Irrigation Minister Engineer 'Abd-al-Rahman Madani met with the two delegations and "stressed that coordination will continue between both countries with a view to reaching a fair, equitable distribution of shared waters" among Syria, Iraq, and Turkey.

Sources among the participants have told AL-HAYAH that Syria "has warned" the French, German, Italian, Belgian, British, and Austrian companies that Damascus will resort to "legal action, including filing compensation claims and staging boycotts" if they do not retreat from their position.

The sources added that "the Syrian protest we addressed to the companies holds them responsible for any harm done to Syria and Iraq. We have informed them that international conventions require coordination between the river's upstream and downstream states" and that financing the project "will cause us serious harm." They pointed out that the Iraqi side will take similar measures against these companies. [passage omitted]

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: HCC Appoints Commission for Talks With Rabbani

LD1402184096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We are hoping that our meetings in Islamabad will have a positive impact on peace in the country. This point was made by General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, leader of Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement], after meetings between members of the High Coordination Council [HCC] and other parties opposed to the Kabul administration.

He said: It was decided during the meetings that if the Kabul administration attacks any opposition party, they [the opposition] will jointly embark on operations against it. The HCC has appointed a 10-member commission for talks with Rabbani, the head of the Kabul administration, he said. General Dostam added that the HCC members will not talk separately to any party. If any party wants to talk to the HCC it should be through the commission.

The leader of Jonbesh-e Melli said that Sebghatollah Mojaddedi has once again been appointed as the president of the HCC. Every member party will send two members to the commission which will soon hold its first meeting. General 'Abdol Rashid said: Mr. Sadeq Modaber [disaffected member of Mohseni's party] has also joined the HCC and his membership has been accepted.

On relations with the Taleban, the Jonbesh leader said: We have many a time said that no party can govern on its own in Afghanistan. We are hoping that we will join the Taleban and other parties opposed to the Kabul administration in the future.

He said: We have never been proponents of fighting in the country and over the past one and a half years we have been in a defensive position. We have made no preparation for fighting in Salang. But since the other side is talking about this, it must have made preparations for fighting in the area.

General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam said: We have many a time said that war is not a way of resolving problems. Rabbani must have pity on the oppressed Afghan nation and not keep insisting on staying in power. He must accept the wishes of the majority and hand over power.

Afghanistan: Mojaddedi Rejoins High Coordination Council

LD1402182896 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Esteemed Sebghatollah Mojaddedi [former Afghan president] has rejoined the High Cordination Council [HCC]. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports to us from Islamabad that last night's meeting was attended by Sebghatollah Mojaddedi who announced that he would rejoin the HCC as a member, retracting his previous announcement that he was leaving the Council. The report says that, as well as Mr. Mojaddedi, last night's meeting was attended by Humayun Jarir, Qariborrahman Sa'id, Ghairat Bahir, Haji Farid from Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party], General 'Abdol Rashid Dostam, General 'Abdol Malik, General Painda and their advisors from Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement], Messrs Mohaqeq, Balaghi and Dr. Taleb from Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity]. Representatives of Mahaz-e Melli [National Front] and Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami [Islamic Revolution Movement] were also present at the meeting.

Afghanistan: Government Sends Delegation to Jalalabad

LD1402185096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Another Kabul administration delegation has arrived in Jalalabad. A Radio Message of Freedom correspondent reports from Jalalabad that the day before yesterday another Kabul administration delegation headed by Dr. 'Abdorrahman [minister of civil aviation] arrived in Jalalabad. The delegation includes the head of the National Olympic Committee, Commander Anwar Jegdalak, and the commander of the 20th Division of the administration, Ahmad Khaled. [words indistinct] According to another report the delegation met with Sayyaf and Khales in the city the day before yesterday. No report has been published on the details of the talks.

Afghanistan: Taleban Shells, Rockets Kabul

LD1402211296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Residential areas in Kabul were hit by 15 Katyusha rockets and heavy weapon shells in the past 24 hours.

Afghan Defense Ministry sources said to the Central News Unit that five persons were wounded in the attacks. According to eye-witnesses six houses were also damaged in the rocket attacks.

Afghan Defense Ministry sources attributed the attacks on Kabul's residential areas to the Taleban group. They said the rockets had been fired from Chahar Asiab in the south of Kabul.

Afghanistan: Radio Claims Clashes Among Mas'ud's Forces

LD1402175096 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There have been heavy clashes between rival groups of the Kabul administration in Kahmard District, Bamian Province.

Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom say that recently heavy clashes have occurred among the Shura-ye Nezar [Supervisory Council — Ahmad Shah Mas'ud's faction] gunmen in Kahmard. As a result [words indistinct] have been killed and large number of others injured.

Afghanistan: Islamic Party Head Warns of Foreign Interference

LD1402230996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Mohammad Akbari, head of the Wahdat-e Eslami [Islamic Unity] council, said that the establishment of a federal government in areas controlled by the opponents of the Afghan Government was a futile thought nurtured by the colonialists. Speaking in Kabul yesterday, he said: This plot will also fail. Akbari said the situation in Afghanistan was being affected by foreign interference and he added: The interference has been blocking a solution to the problem in the country.

Stating that all Afghan factions want to resolve the Afghan problem through talks, the head of the Wahdat-e Eslami council said: Only the Taleban group has chosen the path of fighting and they are bent on destroying the people of Afghanistan.

At the end of his remarks praising the efforts of the Islamic Republic of Iran to resolve the Afghan problem, Mr. Akbari described the agreement reached between the government and Wahdat-e Eslami council in Bamian as an outcome of those efforts.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Commissioner Urges Voters To Take Part in Elections

BK1402165696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque has appealed to voters to cast their votes in the parliamentary elections tomorrow.

In an address to the nation over radio and television this evening, the chief election commissioner said although this election is being held under different circumstances, it is very important. Tomorrow's election is indispensable for maintaining the continuity of the constitutional and democratic process. He said voting is a fundamental right of the people and a sacred deposit of the nation to them. Hence, at this critical juncture of the country, casting votes is a sacred duty of the citizens.

The chief election commissioner said he expected all political parties to take part in the elections. However, it is unfortunate that it is being held without the participation of some major political parties. Justice Sadeque said under whatever circumstances, everyone has the right to boycott the elections. However, no one has the right to obstruct those who want to participate and cast their votes. He said erecting obstacles against the elections is undemocratic. He urged all not to indulge in this type of activity. The chief election commissioner assured all possible cooperation so that voters can go to the polling centers without fear and obstruction to freely cast their votes. He said the members of the law enforcing agencies and the armed forces will be beside voters and assist them at in the time of need.

The chief election commissioner reminded the candidates contesting the elections that if they make any attempt to create anarchy or exert illegal influence in any polling center, then the elections there will be annulled. He added that stern action will be taken against those accused of this type of attitude. He told the officials and employees engaged in election work that all necessary measures have been taken for their security. He called on them to perform their duties sincerely and honestly. He categorically stated that any negligence of duty on their part will not be tolerated. He advised them not to favor any candidate and added that if no vote is cast at any one place, then only empty ballot boxes should come from there. He warned them not to rig the elections or illegally stuff ballot papers into the boxes.

Speaking earlier to foreign newsmen in Dhaka, Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque said the armed forces have been deployed for the smooth conduct of the elections will be withdrawn on 17 February after the polls. These foreign journalists are stationed in Dhaka to gather news about the general elections.

Meanwhile, all arrangements for the elections have been finalized. Tomorrow is a public holiday. Voting will start at 0800 and continue till 1600 without any break. The election commission said 1,450 candidates are contesting for 250 parliamentary seats. Among them are 993 nominees from 41 political parties and alliances. The remaining 457 are independent candidates. Earlier, 48 candidates were unofficially declared elected uncontested in 48 constituencies. The total number of male voters in the elections is 47,400,251 and female voters 23,450,575. A total of 21,106 polling centers and 98,710 polling booths have been set up countrywide. The Election Commission has appointed 66 returning officers in 64 districts, 506 assistant returning officers, and 317,236 polling officers.

Voters who have not been provided with voter identity cards will be able to cast their votes if their names are listed in their respective areas. Those who have already received the identity cards have been advised to cast their votes by showing their cards. It has already been said that a 48-hour ban has been imposed on all kinds of public meetings, processions, and rallies from midnight yesterday in order to hold a free, fair and impartial election. Those violating the ban will be given two to seven years of rigorous imprisonment with fine.

The Election Commission has made some changes in the announcement of election results by radio and television. Radio and television will only broadcast the final results and not the results as they come in. The first election results bulletin will be on air at 2330 on election day and will continue till 1230 the following day. After two hours of break for Friday prayers, Radio Bangladesh and Bangladesh Television will again broadcast election results from 1430 till 1800. After that, radio and television will broadcast the remaining results in their normal bulletins.

Bangladesh: Voting Begins in Parliamentary Elections

BK1502130396 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1215 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Vote counting has begun nationwide after polling booths closed at 1600 this afternoon. Meanwhile, the Election Commission has directed the Election Inquiry Committees in the 64 districts to observe the vote counting and to inform the commission immediately of any irregularities. Voting was more or less peaceful, barring sporadic bomb blasts, hijacking of election articles, and fire being set in one or two places.

President Abdur Rahman Biswas and Begum Biswas cast their votes at the polling center in Bangabhaban Primary School. Prime Minister Khaleda Zia cast her vote at the Adamjee Cantonment College center, while Chief Election Commissioner Justice A.K.M. Sadeque cast his vote at the Uttara High School center. The chief election commissioner also visited several polling centers in the capital. He was accompanied by Election Commissioner Justice Abdul Jalil.

No major untoward incident took place in Dhaka during voting. It ended peacefully except for one or two isolated incidents of fire crackers being hurled. Our correspondent quoting the Election Control Center says voting was obstructed in one or two places.

In Chittagong, voting took place in nine out of 15 constituencies. Similar reports of peaceful elections have been received from Khulna, Rajshahi, Barisal, and Sylhet barring some minor incidents.

Bangladesh: Low Voter Turn-Out; Hundreds Injured in Violence

BK1502131796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bangladesh, low turnout and violence marked the parliamentary poll which ended at 1530 today. Main opposition parties have boycotted the election describing it as farcical. The elections were held amid opposition sponsored bundh [strike] and people's curfew. Six persons were killed today in poll-related violence — one each in Chittagong, Madhukhali, Rajbari, Chuadanga, Birganj, and Barisal. Hundreds of people were injured in incidents of violence, including a bomb blast.

Bangladesh: 50 Injured in Chittagong Election Violence

BK1502055396 Hong Kong AFP in English 0449 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh, Feb 15 (AFP) — At least 50 people were injured Thursday in election violence in this southeastern port city, where armed opposition activists set off home-made bombs and patrolled streets, witnesses said.

Clashes erupted in most of the 180 polling centres of the city when anti-polls activists attacked the centres, police said, adding that the streets were otherwise deserted.

Police officer Quamrul Islam told AFP that trouble was also reported in the villages of Chittagong district, while in many places ballots or ballot boxes had not arrived.

In the first few hours of balloting not a single voter had turned up at the centres, election officials said.

Polling official Kabir Ahmed, at the major Khastagir Girls School, said there were no presiding officials, in addition to other "difficulties."

The voting started at 8 am (0200 GMT). Usually during elections people begin to queue up early in the morning.

In strike-hit capital Dhaka, sporadic crude bomb blasts heralded the start of voting Thursday for the nation's sixth parliament, to deter prospective voters as polling booths opened.

Thousands of troops and paramilitary-backed armed police were patrolling deserted streets and guarding polling centres in Dhaka.

Meanwhile, a 48-hour nationwide stoppage, called by the main opposition parties as part of their two-year campaign to force Prime Minister Khaleda Zia out of office and hold new elections under a caretaker government, entered its final day Thursday. The opposition was boycotting the elections.

The streets were virtually empty of moving vehicles except those carrying journalists and security personnel in the early hours of the day, plus a few pedicabs.

The government declared the day a public holiday.

In more than two weeks of pre-poll violence 23 people have been killed, scores injured and hundreds arrested.

Bangladesh: Bombs Explode, Voter Turnout 'Low' in Dhaka

BK1502085296 Hong Kong AFP in English 0830 GMT 15 Feb 96

[Report by Golam Tahaboor]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] DHAKA, Feb 15 (AFP) — A teenager was killed in shooting Thursday and two others died from injuries sustained in poll troubles as the Bangladesh general election got off to a troubled start.

Officials said turnout for the election, being boycotted by the opposition, was low. Apart from violence in the southeast city of Chittagong, bombs were set off in the the capital, Dhaka, which was in the grip of a general strike.

The 16-year-old boy was killed by a bullet during an anti-election protest near a polling station in Chittagong. Police said the boy, the son of a policeman, was stood in front of his home when hit.

A 22-year-old man also died from injuries suffered in a bomb blast in Chittagong on Wednesday night, doctors said.

A militiaman also died in the southwest district of Rajbari after being hurt in election violence on Wednesday, officials said. The victim was hurt in one of eight attempts by opposition activists to disrupt the distribution of ballot material, they said.

Twenty six people have now been killed in election related violence in the past two weeks as the opposition steps up its campaign against Prime Minister Khaleda Zia.

At least 50 people were hurt when opposition activists attacked polling stations in Chittagong, an opposition stronghold.

Clashes erupted at most of the port-city's 180 polling centres after attacks by activists supporting the opposition boycott, police said.

They said the turnout was very low and that the streets of the city were virtually deserted. Troubles were also reported in villages around Chittagong and in many places ballot papers and boxes had not arrived, police told AFP.

Thousands of troops, paramilitaries and police patrolled Dhaka which was deserted on the second day of a general strike, also called by the opposition.

AFP reporters who went to nearly a dozen polling stations in Dhaka's Motijheel, Segunbagicha, Moghbazar and Mohammadpur districts reported slow voting.

Less than 10 percent of voters in the districts had cast their votes in the first two hours. But poll officials and government supporters said voting would pickup if there was no major violence.

At one central Dhaka school being used for the election, a crude bomb exploded at the gate within 15 minutes before the start of polling at 8:00am, slightly injuring the local poll chief, Firoz Ahmed, and a police sergeant.

Ahmed said that despite the incident, 65 of the centre's 5,192 voters had turned up by 10.00am.

Only 118 had voted at the Segunbagicha school which has 2,900 voters. But there was a queue of 20 outside and poll chief Sultan Mahmud said the number of voters was picking up.

With troops on machine gun-fitted trucks patrolling streets or standing guard outside some sensitive polling centres, more people came out on the streets around mid-morning.

The general strike started Wednesday as part of the opposition campaign against the election and to force Zia to stand down and hold new elections under a caretaker government.

Zia voted in Dhaka and said she was "very happy."

The opposition, led by Sheikh Hasina Wajed, head of the Awami League, is boycotting the election alleging no polls could be fair while Zia controls the country.

Some 400,000 troops, police and militamen are taking part in a security clampdown at the 17,000 polling centres in 250 constituencies. Polling stations will be open for eight hours. The government declared the day a public holiday.

Bangladesh: 1st Day of Opposition Strike Passes 'Peacefully'

BK1402164496 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The first day of the country-wide hartal [strike] called by some opposition political parties passed off peacefully in Dhaka today. Dhaka Metropolitan Police informed BANGLADESH SANGBAD SANGSTHA [BSS] that they have received no report of untoward incidents. Automobiles were completely out of the streets but small number of rickshaws plied on some routes before noon, but later they came out in large numbers. Train and launch communications to and from Dhaka were affected. Four domestic flights and one international flight were canceled, while the rest of flights operated normally. There were some sporadic bomb blasts in the morning hours at several places in the city. There were also chase and counter-chase between police and opposition activists in some areas during the period. Several rickshaws were damaged at Mirpur.

Our Rajshahi and Khulna representatives say there have been several bomb blasts in the two cities without any casualties. The hartals passed off peacefully. BSS says one Pankaj Sheel was killed instantly when the bomb he was carrying in his pocket exploded near Chittagong Steel Mills at Patenga. One Faridul Alam was also seriously injured in the same incident. He has been admitted to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

India

India: Minister—Extremists Have Links With Sri Lankan Group

BK1502023296 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The finance minister has said that the major impact of the new economic programs of the government is that liberalized policies have firmly put down black marketing and smuggling in the country. Speaking at a Congress-I workers camp in Bangalore today, Dr. Manmohan Singh said the best example is the gold market where smuggling was the order of the day till liberalization was introduced.

[Begin Singh recording] Now our beloved Prime Minister Sri P.V. Narasimha Raoji has carried forward that task. [end recording]

Speaking on the occasion, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said that extremists and terrorists are getting support from outside. He said terrorist forces which were restricted to Jammu and Kashmir and in the northeastern region are now having links with the [Sri Lankan] LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] leading to an exchange arms and ammunition.

India: Daily Criticizes U.S. Secretary's 'Unusual Address'

BK1502112696 Madras THE HINDU in English 14 Feb 96 p 8

[Article by Suman Sahai]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The U.S. Agriculture Secretary Mr. Daniel Glickman, recently delivered a most unusual address in Delhi. Addressing scientists at the Indian Agriculture Research Institute (IARI), he made a strong plea that India must promote and protect multinational companies [MNC's] as against government and public sector agencies like the IARI. Curiously enough, the nation's leading agricultural scientists listened to this affront without comment or protest.

Continuing in his remarkable vein, Mr. Glickman offered the thesis that one cannot rely on the government and the public sector to provide innovation and technology and that this could only be provided by multinationals. For Mr. Glickman's edification, it may be pointed out that in India a near miracle took place in agriculture during the Seventies and Eighties. A food-deficient, food-importing country transformed itself into a food-surplus, food-exporting country in the span of 15 to 20 years. This miracle did not happen at the hands of multinationals, it resulted from the extraordinary cooperation between the public sector scientists and farmers.

India has a strong public sector in agriculture. A vast network of scientists working in agriculture universities and Government institutions like those of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research have time and again responded to the challenges in our country with innovative solutions and sophisticated technology. Like all sciences, agriculture in India will also benefit from collaborations and a cross fertilisation of ideas, but to suggest that existing structures be thrown out and be replaced with multinationals, is to invite ridicule of a high order.

Multinational companies must be kept out of agriculture, particularly the seed sector. There are several reasons for this. The first and most important, has to do with the control of genetic resources, the foundation material required for the breeding of new crop varieties in order to maintain a vibrant, viable system of agriculture. To do this it is necessary to keep on breeding new varieties to meet challenges from environmental factors like waterlogging or salinity or disease.

Crop varieties that are growing well can suddenly become vulnerable to a disease, or the land in a particular area begins to turn saline and new varieties with greater salt tolerance have to be bred for it. Today with the threat of global warming, scientists are trying to breed varieties of traditionally grown crops which will tolerate the higher temperatures that are anticipated if the earth turns warmer.

To be able to breed new strains scientists look for genes with desirable characters like higher yield or disease resistance in the great diversity of crop varieties that exist already, and in their wild relatives. So far scientists have not been hindered from using any gene anywhere in the world, because access to genes has been totally free.

All this will change if the GATT IPR [Intellectual Property Rights] regime of protecting plant varieties and their genes, by patents or UPOV [International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants] type Plant Breeders Rights is enforced. The first casualty will be the free exchange of genetic material, so necessary for continuing the work of breeding. If multinational companies are allowed to enter seed production, and we accept the demand to patent plans and genes, there is absolutely no doubt that it will be MNCs and not Indian agencies who will win the race for patents every time.

In India plant breeding and seed production is largely in the public domain. Plant breeding is undertaken by agricultural universities and units of ICAR, whereas seed multiplication is in the hands of the National and State Seed Corporations. There are sound reasons for this. In a developing country like India where agriculture is the livelihood of the majority of its people, the Government must take the responsibility of ensuring that reasonably priced seeds for diverse agricultural conditions are available to farmers at reasonable prices. The point here is not to maximise profit as would be the case in the private sector, but to sustain the livelihood of several million people.

A strong multinational presence coupled with IPR protection as Mr. Glickman is advocating for India, will result in a catastrophe. Almost all new releases will belong to MNCs simply by virtue of their gigantic financial capacities. Research is unfortunately as much a matter of talent as of money. More money means more resources to invest in breeding and it means greater speed in putting varieties on the market. For every one wheat breeder that the IARI can employ, a company like Cargill can employ maybe a hundred. For every rupee that an agricultural university can spend on its research, a company like Pioneer can spend 10,000 and more. It needs to be kept in mind that the research budgets alone of some of these MNCs are more than the budget of the Indian Union.

MNC-owned varieties with patented genes in them lock up those genes in the protected varieties and debar Indian scientists from using their own genetic material. Although India has accepted Plant Breeders Rights, not patents for plant varieties, it has accepted patents for micro-organisms. The corporate definition of micro-organisms is now being stretched to include genes, cells and cell organelles along with bacteria, virus and fungii. By being able to patent genes and gene constructs, a patent like protection can be extended to plant varieties too.

There is an argument put out by some who suggest that the entry of multinational companies with their superior technology would bring greatly improved seeds to Indian farmers. These claims would be difficult to substantiate on the basis of facts. Take the Pepsi experience. Pepsi Foods gained entry into the soft drinks and food processing market by promising investment in agricultural research and breeding new varieties suited for food processing.

Whereas Pepsi sells its soft drinks and potato chips unhindered in Indian markets it has not honoured the contractual clauses regarding research and development. Pepsi has not produced a single new variety of anything in all these years. Its potato chips are produced from existing Indian varieties and its much acclaimed tomato breakthrough is in reality a strain called "Naveen" which is bred and marketed by Indo-American Hybrid and the breeding material for which came from the agriculture university in Ludhiana.

If Indian research institutions are unable to compete financially and are denied access to patented genetic material, Indian scientists will find it increasingly difficult to breed new varieties. This will gradually become the sole privilege of the large foreign companies. In this way, the control over our genetic resources will pass into the hands of MNCs who will not find it difficult to dominate seed production in this country.

What implications does this have. First of all it poses an immense threat to Indian food security. If a significant proportion of seed production is in foreign hands, then those foreign companies are in a position to wield disproportionate influence on Indian policies. The days of PL-480 are not so long ago. Those who remember the humiliations heaped upon us as we stood begging for food should be in the forefront, demanding that food security must never be compromised.

Control over seed production means control over food supply. No self-respecting nation can allow foreign companies to threaten its food security by allowing it to control the means of food production. That is the second grave threat that emanates from the entry of multinationals in the seed sector. To remain independent, India must ensure complete self-reliance in food. It is well on its way to achieving this and these efforts must not in any way be compromised by allowing MNCs into the farm sector.

And the final reason why MNCs must be banned completely from agriculture, is linked to employment generation. Perhaps the single greatest problem facing India today is the massive extent of rural unemployment. The most logical sector to generate jobs for rural youth is in and around villages and associated with agriculture, an activity they are familiar with. There is no reason in the world why a multinational company should be given the licence to produce potato chips and tomato sauce. Such activities in agro-business and food processing provide the ideal avenues for generating rural employment and must be reserved for rural communities.

India will suffer a tremendous setback if it allows multinational companies to exploit its agricultural sector. This is our strongest and most promising sector. Economists estimate that investments in agriculture will show profitable returns within five years. To produce similar results, Indian industry will need 15 to 20 years.

Iran

Iran: Rafsanjani on Importance of Jerusalem Day

LD1402195496 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a gathering of the presidential office staff tonight, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said the international Qods Day [Jerusalem Day, 16 February 1996] is a day for expressing support for the oppressed nation of Palestine and the world of Islam, and also for declaring hatred for the tyranny and aggression of the global arrogance, in particular the usurper Israel.

The president stressed that the proud and courageous people of Iran, with their extensive participation in the Qods Day rallies, will once again show the world the degree of their commitment to revolutionary, humanistic, and Islamic objectives.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani added: The presence of millions of fasting revolutionary people of Iran in the Qod's Day rallies on 22 Bahman [11 February, revolution anniversary] throughout the country warmed the hearts of the friends of the Islamic revolution. He said the enemies of the revolution were unable to understand and analyze this historical event and they made futile attempts to conceal the various dimensions of its magnificence from the world public opinion.

The president, furthermore, expressed satisfaction at the performance of the country's executive power as a whole. He said: The people of Iran are sincere, loyal and vigilant, and there is no limit to how much one can serve these people.

Iran: 'Zionist' Regime's Measures on Jerusalem Day Viewed

NC1502114496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 15 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of World Jerusalem Day and at a time when Muslims throughout the world and people in the occupied territories are preparing themselves for vast participation in ceremonies to mark the day, the Zionist regime is trying to limit participation in the World Jerusalem Day ceremonies, especially in the occupied territories, with various measures.

The demonstrations by Muslim Palestinians in the days leading to Jerusalem Day, which speak of their readiness for as spectacular a participation in the Jerusalem Day ceremonies as possible, have caused concern among the Zionist authorities who regard the marking of this day on an extensive scale as a show of the Palestinian people's opposition with the compromise process. Thus, at a time when they are resorting to extensive propaganda to portray progress in the process, they consider extensive presence in the Jerusalem Day ceremonies to negate this propaganda.

In a bid to prevent the presence of Muslim Palestinians in Jerusalem Day ceremonies, the Zionist regime has declared a state of emergency, blocked the roads leading to the West Bank of Jordan and the Gaza Strip, and deployed troops on roads in a bid to take deterrent measures. The Zionist authorities intend to spread fear and terror and to propound the possible threats of partaking in Jerusalem Day ceremonies in a bid to prevent the Palestinians from participation in these ceremonies. Meanwhile, by stressing their expansionist allegations and policies, the Zionist authorities have tried to project the picture that anti-Zionist operations and popular protests will not affect the Zionist regime's determination, in an effort to downplay participation in the Jerusalem Day ceremonies.

On the eve of Jerusalem Day, the Zionist foreign minister has said that Jerusalem is a Zionist city and is to become the capital city of the regime, adding that Israel will not accept any attempt aimed at stopping this. Meanwhile, the Israeli housing minister has made public new programs for the construction of settlements, under which Israel intends to build 5,500 new housing units on the West Bank and Muslim-inhabited areas in Jerusalem. While the announcement of these programs reveals the true character of the Zionist regime, which is hiding under the mask of peace-seeking allegations, it also shows how the Zionist regime is not faithful to the compromise deals it signed.

Everything that harms the optimism of the compromisers toward the peace process and further shows the futility of this process strengthens the opponents of the compromise process and the anti-Zionist struggle in occupied Palestine. The strengthening of this opposition, which enjoys the support of the Palestinian people, can isolate the compromise process and create the grounds for the struggle for the fulfillment of the liberation of Jerusalem.

Therefore, the steps taken by the Zionist regime on the eve of Jerusalem Day to decrease the Palestinian people's presence in ceremonies marking this day not only does not decrease the people's presence, but makes them more determined to hold the ceremonies as spectacularly as possible.

Iran: Militant Clergy Member Interviewed on Elections

NC1502081396 Tehran RESALAT in Persian
30 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tehran Militant Clergy enjoys full harmony and there are no differences in its Central Council.

This was stated by Ayatollah Mojtahed-Shabestari, Tehran deputy and one of the members of the Tehran Militant Clergy's Central Council, in an interview with RESALAT's parliamentary correspondent.

Speaking about the history of the association, he said: The Militant Clergy Association is an organization that was created before the revolution and its founders were great martyrs such as martyr Motahhari, martyr Beheshti, martyr Bahonar, and martyr Mofatteh. Now too, outstanding personalities such as Their Eminences the Ayatollahs Mahdavi-Kani, Hashemi-Rafsanjani [referred to as Ayatollah], Emami-Kashani, and Yazdi, as well as Hojjat ol-Eslam Nateq-Nuri are present in this association.

Referring to the fact that, because of their bright record of struggle, the members of this association are trusted by the people, he spoke about the active presence of this establishment on the scene of the elections and said: The Militant Clergy Association carefully examines the candidates and takes into consideration all requirements and tries to propose competent candidates.

Mr. Mojtahed-Shabestari pointed out that this, of course, does not mean that the rest of the candidates are not competent.

Speaking about the criteria used by the association to support a candidate, he said: Practical obligation toward the constitution and the supreme jurisconsult, belief in Islamic teachings, acquaintance with the country's problems and interests, having the expertise called for by the Majles, and efforts to solve the people's problems are among the criteria that the association takes into consideration and uses in order to support candidates.

In continuation, he referred to supervision by the Council of Guardians in the elections and stated: No just person doubts the need for supervision, and this supervision should be such as to create the grounds for fit people to become candidates and, also, to prevent the entry of incompetent people.

The Tehran deputy added: The Council of Guardians is formed of six just and pious scholars and six lawyers selected by the Majles. It is the most competent establishment that can supervise a significant issue such as the elections.

Speaking about the meaning of approbatory supervision by the Council of Guardians, which some are questioning without any reason, he said: An overseer should have the power to act and be able to prevent violations. If supervision means that the Council of Guardians, as an overseer, does not have the right to interfere and should merely be an observer, definitely this was not what those who approved the Constitution had in mind.

Ayatollah Mojtahed-Shabestari added: In view of the criteria stated in the law, the Council of Guardians examines the competence of candidates, and since six of its members are just and their justness has been approved by the esteemed leader, they will never mingle factional criteria and the group inclinations of individuals with their duties and will only act on the basis of regulations.

The Tehran deputy stressed the people's extensive presence in the upcoming Majles elections and said: The larger the number of people who go to the polls, the more the Islamic Republic will be strengthened.

The head of the Majles commercial commission said about the special characteristics of the fourth term: One of the outstanding points of the fourth Majles was the existence of an atmosphere of friendship and understanding and the fact that it stayed away from factional disputes.

Referring to the approval of the Second Plan bill and many other major plans for the solution of the economic and cultural problems during the fourth term, he said: Experts believe that the specialized aspects of the Majles were further strengthened and experts' views used more during this term than in the past. On the whole, the fourth term was in a far better position when it came to considering moral issues and achieving outcomes, and the consent which it gained from the esteemed leader was a source of pride for the past term's deputies.

It should be noted that a reliable source, commenting on the Tehran Militant Clergy's list of candidates for Tehran, said: This list has been completed, and I don't think that there will be any changes in its composition.

He listed the names of the new people on the list as follows:

The Hojjat ol-Eslams 'Abdolhoseyn Mo'ezzi and Seyyed Reza Akrami, and Messrs. Badamchian, Seyyed Mohammad Asghari, Musa Zargar, and Davud Danesh-Ja'fari.

He said: The names of the other candidates of the Tehran Militant Clergy who are Tehran deputies in this term too are as follows:

The Hojjat ol-Eslams Nateq-Nuri, Movahhedi-Kermani, Hasan Ruhani, Mojtahed-Shabestari, Seyyed 'Ali Akbar Hoseyni, Seyyed Reza Taqavi, Seyyed 'Ali Akbar Abutorabi, Movahhedi-Savoji, Dorri-Najafabadi, Seyyed Mahmud Do'ayi, and Messrs. 'Asgar-Owladi, Larijani, Bahonar, Morteza Nabavi, Sheybani, Yahyavi, Khamushi, Shahaboddin Sadr, and 'Ali 'Abbaspur, as well as the following ladies: Behruzi, Vahid-Dastjerdi, Fayazbakhsh, Nowbakht, and Salihi.

Iran: Deputy—Emergence of New Parties 'Meaningless'

NC1502121396 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 6 Feb 96 pp 1, 5

[Report on IRNA interview with Tehran Majles Deputy Habibollah 'Asgar-owladi Mosalman, ICA secretary general, by unidentified correspondent in Tehran; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] ICA [Islamic Coalition Association] Secretary General Habibollah 'Asgar-owladi Mosalman said: The groupings propounded by the various schools of political thought are meaningless; the only genuine line is that of the absoluteness of the Velayat-e Faqih [rule by the supreme jurisconsult].

Speaking to IRNA, he said: The division of the Muslim forces into the Militant Clergy, Militant Clerics, traditional and modern rightist factions, and so on is meaningless. The main decrees are by the leader, regardless of the different perceptions in the country.

'Asgar-owladi Mosalman stated: All the groups and individuals should strive to harmonize themselves with the recent exhortations of the great Vali-ye Faqih [supreme jurisconsult].

Commenting on the second statement by the Kargozaran-e Nezam ['implementers of the system' and known as Servants of Reconstruction], he added: The second statement by the Kargozaran-e Nezam entails their presentation of a list without the signatures of the ministers and the members of the Majles Executive Committee.

He said: This is tantamount to the signatory ministers endorsing a list without the necessary signatures; this contravenes the law. If this is done, all the other candidates will complain.

The ICA secretary general asserted: The revered great leader of the revolution and the president themselves do not consider the reconstruction of the country as their monopoly but in their second statement the group members refer to themselves as Kargozaran-e Sazandegi ['implementers of reconstruction']. [passage omitted]

He stressed: The current circumstances demand that formations such as that of the Kargozaran-e Nezam that have been functioning covertly should enter the arena officially and overtly. This will heighten the liveliness and fervor of the elections but it should not be accompanied by monopolistic aspirations.

Iran: DPK Urges Boycott of Elections

NC1502095096 (Clandestine) Voice of Iranian Kordestan in Persian 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Statement issued by the Democratic Party of Kordestan of Iran's (DPK) Political Bureau on 14 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear compatriots, combatant people of Kordestan: The Iranian regime is staging another play, the elections for the fifth Majles on 18 Esfand 1374 [9 March 1996]. But, like other plays, the actors and the climax are known.

The [word indistinct] of the current elections, minimum popular participation, and the further isolation of the regime because of our compatriots' aversion to the Islamic Republic during the past few years have terrified the regime, concerned about the nonparticipation of the people in the Majles elections. It has started to think of ways to fool the people and, by whipping up propaganda and commotion in the newspapers and [words indistinct], it aims to portray that the people's right in choosing their candidates will (?be respected). Some of the regime's [words indistinct] are speaking of free elections. [break in transmission lasting 3 minutes]

Free elections mean the overthrow of the regime. In the Islamic Republic there is no freedom for the people. Free elections and all the hue and cry in relation with this will fool no one [word indistinct] people of Iran.

Dear compatriots, for these and many other reasons, it is every patriot's national duty not to participate in the elections and to further isolate the regime. But if you have no alternative, but to go to the polls, write the word democracy on the ballot and thus express your aversion to the regime and its sham elections. [Station goes off the air for a few seconds]

You know of [words indistinct] and how your national demands are being answered by the bullet, torture, and executions. The so-called candidates are not your true candidates and representatives. They are the Islamic Republic of Iran's representatives and do not need your votes to go to the Majles. Therefore, [words indistinct], carry out your duty. Disgrace the regime and do not participate in the elections or write the words democracy and autonomy on your ballots if you must participate. May we witness true elections soon, under a democratic regime in which the people of Iran can freely vote for their true representatives without any threats.

[Signed] The Democratic Party of Kordestan of Iran's Political Bureau

[Date] 25 Bahman 1374 [14 February 1996]

Iran: Borujerdi on Talks in Kabul, Islamabad

LD1402224996 Tehran IRNA in English 2127 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 14, IRNA — Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia-Pacific Affairs, 'Ala'eddin Borujerdi said here on Wednesday that Pakistani Deputy Foreign Minister Najmuddin Sheikh will soon visit Tehran to discuss the Afghan issue as well as relations between Islamabad and Kabul. He said that during his recent visit to Kabul and Islamabad, steps were taken forward to remove the differences between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Iran, he added, will continue its mediation efforts to create understanding between the two countries.

On recent developments in Afghanistan and the meeting of the Afghan opposition in Islamabad, Borujerdi said Iran hopes that the decisions made in Islamabad would lead to direct talks with the Afghan government. The Afghan opposition held a meeting in Islamabad to discuss a coordinated strategy to resolve the crisis in Afghanistan.

Borujerdi described the statement of Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani to hold talks with the opposition as a step forward, and said that a positive reply from the opposition would be a breakthrough to end the infighting in Afghanistan. The Islamic Republic of Iran supports any talks to bring peace and understanding to Afghanistan, he added.

Borujerdi said the agreement signed between Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] led by Golboddin Hekmatyar and the Afghan government on opening of the highways to Kabul was also a positive step, and added, "we regard the agreement as worthy and hope that signing of similar agreements will continue in Afghanistan."

Iran: Mojahedin-e Khalq Allegedly Kidnap, Torture Ex-Member

LD1402222096 Tehran IRNA in English 2003 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 14, IRNA — A former member of the terrorist grouplet Mojahedin-e Khalq organization (MKO) was kidnapped and tortured by MKO terrorists in Germany. According to a report carried by Radio France, the unnamed 28 year old Iranian is currently under treatment in a German hospital, and the German police are investigating the incident. The report said that last weekend four armed persons speaking Persian forcibly took the man, who was returning from a friend's house, and tortured him in a basement for two days.

It said that the ex MKO member managed to break loose and run away when being transferred from the basement. The MKO in its statement has called the said person a 'traitor'.

Iran: Economic Priorities for Majles Viewed

NC1402200796 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 5 Feb 96 p 4

[Commentary by Dr. Habib Chini: "The Fifth Majles and Foreign Economic Relations"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The process of the registration of candidates for the next Majles is moving ahead with distinct fervor and enthusiasm. As was expected, the number of nominees for the majority faction in parliament — the main faction contesting the fifth Majles elections — has far exceeded the anticipated number. Nearly all of the candidates who are not affiliated with any group or faction have registered individually. This will not in any way affect the electoral process or the votes they will receive. What is certain is that the people will once again vote on the basis of their familiarity with the candidates or their individual preferences.

It is worth considering whether the nominees for the upcoming Majles elections are knowledgable about the economic problems facing the country. Perhaps most of them have an in-depth familiarity with the nation's problems and responsibilities and believe that they should not volunteer for nomination as "a burden not shouldered is easy to throw to the ground." Those who feel a moral sense of responsibility and who are conscientious should first test their resilience in the face of problems and should then step into the arena.

The fourth Majles encountered many problems but is in a position to gloat as it will soon hand over responsibility of the country to the fifth Majles in far better circumstances than at the beginning of its session. Economic and social stability is stronger, and the country's international prestige is more favorable than it was when the fourth Majles took over the Judiciary. Probably the report on this Majles' performance will be disseminated later, and there is no need for us to comment on it at this time.

Here, we wish to attract attention of the nominees for the fifth round of Majles elections to the most important issues they will have to grapple with if they are elected: In recent years, especially since the inception of the National Security Council, the country's foreign policy has been based on firm foundations. No longer does every one utter thoughtless opinions out of sheer ignorance or rehash issues all over the country. Our country is now recognized as having a firm, strong foreign policy, which will never renege on its principles.

The U.S. economic embargo is more unpleasant than its threat to subvert our government. This is because the second will have no effect, but the first may prevent our friends from getting close to us. Naturally, it is not our style to grovel at the feet of the United States and beg it to lift the economic embargo. We should prove to other countries with our finesse and non-intervention in their internal affairs that we are their friends, that we are eager to win their friendship, and that because of this illogical economic war initiated by the United States against us, we should ignore it.

Fortunately, except for Israel, not one country has so far sided with the United States. In any case, in view of the fact that each country has its own distinct relations with the United States based on its situation, they may be rather cautious in upgrading their relations with us, which will not be very pleasant for us. [passage omitted]

The future Majles should be removed from all kinds of needless noise, or God forbid, irresponsible statements, and be vigilant about the country's foreign relations. The era of approaching all issues with intense sensitivity has passed. Work should now be handed to logical experts. Our reaction to the problems that arise in foreign relations — whether we like it or not — should be logical, calculated, and based on the country's longterm aspirations and should be in proportion, sensible, and ultimately, aimed at building ties and eliminating differences. With a few irresponsible remarks, we can turn our friends into enemies.

Our executive policies and strategies and our objectives in international and regional issues have become clearly identified for our friends and enemies in recent years, however, diplomacy is not something that can be completed in one fell swoop. Just as the enemy's provocations are unacceptable, and as the adage says: "The enemy becomes more deceitful by the moment," we should continue to be vigilant.

It would, therefore, be better if our reactions and opinions in this sensitive area were presented by experts, regardless of whether they will hold portfolios in the Majles or the cabinet. Many countries feel no hostility toward us or our neighbors with regard to economic relations, at least, ostensibly, and they continue to pursue their own interests. Hence, we should also act in an expeditious, decisive, and calculated manner with regard to our foreign economic relations, and we should not relinquish our foreign markets for nothing. The Majles should, therefore, approve laws and oversee their implementation, which should pave the way for multifaceted progress in these relations and not permit rival countries to gain control of our markets.

Once again, it should be stressed that it is a law of nature not to leave a vacuum unfilled. If we do not act swiftly and effectively, others in the region will take our place, especially those just coming into existence, which have forged ahead in this direction.

The laws that the Majles will draft should be "intrinsically effective and comprehensive" so that they may yield practical results. They should, thus, be able to place us above the other countries as we deserve to be because these markets are naturally ours. [passage omitted]

Iran: Azerbaijan Province, Tatarstan Sign Trade Accord

LD1402234496 Tehran IRNA in English 2149 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Orumiyeh (West Azerbaijan), Feb. 14, IRNA — A trade and economic agreement was signed between the Russian Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan and Iran's West Azerbaijan Province here on Wednesday [14 February]. Based on the agreement, the West Azerbaijan cooperatives organization and Tatarstan's oil and gas company will engage in barter trade.

The two sides are to exchange goods up to the ceiling of dlrs 24 million, with West Azerbaijan supplying Tatarstan with fruits, foodstuff and clothes in exchange for Tatarstan's rubber, heavy vehicles, steels and chemical materials. The goods shall be forwarded via the Caspian Sea and the two sides would also use road transit routes across the Caucasus republics.

The agreement was signed by the governor general of West Azerbaijan, 'Ali Siyadat, and Tatarstan's deputy trade minister of economic affairs Valeriy Zaytsov. Zaytsov expressed satisfaction with the begininng of trade cooperation with the Azerbaijan republic [as received] and said the two sides can enjoy its benefits in the future.

Tatarstan annually produces 25 million tons of oil and 120,000 tons of meat, and manufactures aircraft, ships and helicopters. The Tatar delegation left Orumiyeh on Wednesday afternoon after signing the trade agreement.

Iran: Minister Explains Judicial System to UN Envoy

LD1402222996 Tehran IRNA in English 2045 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 14, IRNA — Minister of justice, Hojjat ol-Eslam Esma'il Shushtari today enlightened the representative of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Maurice Danby Copithorne, on the judicial system in Iran and the respect for rights and freedom.

Shushtari told Copithorne: "You have specialized in law, and are well aware that each country has a constitution different from the other, and in addition has its own special customs and traditions to be observed."

He said that in Iran, for the sake of safeguarding public rights, judges, after completing their professional studies, undergo training in different courses, and every year five of them are sent abroad to get acquainted with the laws of other countries.

At present, he said, 4,000 judges are serving in Iranian judiciary system, of whom 800 are ulema and 300 judges are women. This year, added Shushtari, 600 judges including 200 women will take up fresh appointments. He said that a disciplinary court is responsible to examine cases of misdemeanor by the judges.

"I had told the former U.N. human rights rapporteur Reynaldo Galindo Pohl that a revolution has taken place in Iran and that the revolution has enemies who might level false charges directly or indirectly," said Shushtari.

He said that Iran follows Islam and that Islam respects rights of individuals more than any other system. "We cooperated with Galindo Pohl and will cooperate with you to study the real nature of [word indistinct] in Iran," he added.

Copithorne said that he would visit the Islamic Republic of Iran again in future and is busy studying the respect for human rights in Iran.

Meanwhile, Copithorne attended a court proceeding about an embezzlement case at Bank Tejarat. Two female defense lawyers were handling the case.

Iran: Commentary Questions UN Human Rights Envoy's Impartiality

LD1402164396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] UN Human Rights envoy, Maurice Danby Copithorne, met with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, on 13 February.

In the meeting Mr. Velayati criticized the United Nations and its affiliated bodies' performance, saying: The United Nations, since its establishment, has failed to have any clear stance over different matters, including human rights, and our people have many examples of the organization's selective conduct in mind.

This is, of course, not the first time Iranian officials are bringing the UN's performance and double standard under fire. The UN Human Rights Commission has, on various occasions, accused Iran, in its reports and resolutions, of violating human rights. However, these reports and resolutions have, because of numerous reasons, lacked bearing and authenticity. They have mostly been drawn up based on biased documents or in default of compelling evidence, coming under criticism by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

At any rate, what presently differentiates the envoy of UN Human Rights Commission's visit to Iran from similar visits by other envoys is the aims that Mr. Copithorne has declared for his visit to Tehran. Speaking about how his report would be reflected, he has said that the reason behind his visit is to reflect the facts as they are, and prepare a genuine report over the situation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. He further said that he would take endless efforts to be impartial over the human rights situation in Iran.

In fact, as long as practicing and judging human rights fail to be impartial and remain under the domineering powers' political sway, the lofty aim of attaining human rights in the true sense of the word would remain illusive as ever. Mighty countries take advantage of the United Nations and human rights as a tool against independent countries that are under no circumstances willing to accept their imposing policies. But, actually, they do nothing in the face of countries such as the Zionist regime, which is the real violator of human rights. Such contradictions and behavior could definitely bring about an atmosphere of distrust in view of the United Nations performance and decisions.

Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, Iran has, on various occasions, come face to face with such discriminations, and at present, to make sure that the United Nations is impartial, it is seeking evidence from the UN Human Rights Commission.

Iran: Editorial Criticizes European Stance on Salman Rushdie

LD1502101496 Tehran IRNA in English 0708 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 15 (IRNA) — The English [language] daily IRAN NEWS Thursday [15 February] criticized some northern European countries particularly Britain for using the case of the apostate Salman Rushdie as a political weapon against Iran.

The editorial said that European countries with close ties with Iran, such a Italy, Spain, France and Germany, must clearly understand that this whole affair is a British-designed political ploy with some support from certain other northern European countries.

The paper lambasted Britain and its supporters asking if they were such great believers in the concept of human rights, why they have not reacted to the massacre of tens of thousands of innocent Bosnian Muslims and ethnic cleansing of their territories by the Serbs.

It seems ironic that despite their reaction towards the developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they are so outraged at something that has not even happened to the apostate Rushdie, it said.

"If Europe is concerned with its future global power-sharing requirements, it must understand the crucial and significant role Iran plays in world affairs and in the Persian Gulf region, and must formulate a comprehensive policy for cooperation with Tehran."

The paper criticized that if Irano-European relations are so vulnerable that they can be severely damaged over an insignificant individual such as the apostate Rushdie, then it may be advisable that cooperation plans be abandoned altogether.

"Not having extensive cooperation with Europe is less detrimental to Iran than having a half-hearted and shaky relationship which is vulnerable to insignificant factors such as the apostate Rushdie," it said.

Iran: Commentary Views Afghan Opposition Leaders' Meeting

LD1402211896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 14 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The political leaders of the anti-Rabbani alliance of the High Coordination Council ended their four-day meeting announcing readiness for talks on the transfer of power.

At the end of the meeting the leaders stressed five points for resolving the Afghan crisis. These points are: talks on the transfer of power, the resignation of Rabbani's government, the establishment of an interim government, the demilitarization of Kabul, and the holding of general elections.

The important thing about the stance of Rabbani's opponents is that Rabbani has not been asked to resign as a precondition for talks on the transfer of power.

According to observers, this relative flexibility could be due to the danger the Afghan parties believe to be threatening the territorial integrity of their country and due to the military and political stalemate in Afghanistan. The observers believe that the invitation to General Dostam, the leader of the Jonbesh-e Melli [National Movement], [to visit Pakistan] was connected with inviting Rabbani to the forthcoming meeting of the Afghan leaders in Pakistan. This view is being strengthened by the fact that, in their meetings with the Afghan leaders, the Pakistani leaders insisted more than anything else on the territorial integrity of Afghanistan.

On the other hand, the experience of the recent months has shown that the opposing groups cannot remove the Rabbani government by force, and the continuation of the fighting will only intensify hostilities. So it seems that the plan for a peaceful transfer of power in Afghanistan is getting stronger. It should be said that the Taleban is the only group that is opposing this plan and is refusing to talk to the government. The observers are of the opinion that, taking into account the prevailing military and political situation in Afghanistan, this group is also under pressure in connection with the peaceful transfer of power and the formation of a broad-based government. However, the military and political situation in Afghanistan is more complicated than ostentatious signs playing a determining role in reducing the tension in that country.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Dehlvi on MQM Leader Seeking Asylum in U.S. Consulate

BK1502155696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1531 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Feb 15 (AFP) — A key leader of the opposition Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) Thurday left a hearing in a special court, slipped past police and entered the U.S. Consulate in Karachi where he asked for political asylum, the party said. Ajmal Dehlvi, a senior MQM leader said Kanwar Khalid Yunus apparently managed to enter the U.S. Consulate building, one of the most heavily guarded in Karachi, and announced that he wanted political asylum.

Pakistani officials told AFP that Yunus, a former MP, was leaving a special court for the suppression of terrorist activities when he ducked into the U.S. Consulate adjacent to the court building. "He (Yunus) is soon going to come out," one official said on condition of anonymity, adding that negotiations were underway.

It remained unclear how Yunus managed to evade the police guards and gain entry to the U.S. Consulate. U.S. Consulate officials in Karachi and U.S. Embassy officials in Islamabad were not immediately available for comment.

Yunus, a former member of the National Assembly (lower house), was arrested in May 1994 on charges of masterminding a string of terrorist acts, including murder and arson, in Pakistan's commercial capital of Karachi.

Dehlvi said this was the first case in which a well-known MQM leader had sought political asylum by entering the U.S. Consulate building.

The U.S. Consulate building is one of the most heavily guarded buildings in Karachi after two American consulate staffers were shot dead last March in an attack on their van while coming to work.

The MQM, which represents Urdu-speaking migrants from India after the subcontinent's partition in 1947, is blamed by the government for much of the violence in Karachi where more than 2,000 people have died in the past 14 months. The party denies the charges and accuses the government of persecuting its supporters. A number of MQM militants have been killed over the past six months in what the authorities say were armed "encounters" with security personnel. The MQM says its militants are being gunned down in cold blood after being arrested. Yunus and a number of other MQM legislators have been in prison since May 1994.

Pakistan: Afghan Faction Head Hekmatyar Meets U.S. Envoy, Leghari

LD1502110896 Tehran IRNA in English 0829 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad, Feb 15 (IRNA) — Head of Hezb-e Eslami [Islamic Party] of Afghanistan, Golboddin Hekmatyar, called on the U.S. Ambassador Thomas W. Simons in Islamabad on Wednesday.

The U.S. envoy discussed with Hekmatyar the latest developments in Afghanistan.

Informed afghan sources told IRNA that both sides also talked about the outcome of the recent top Afghan opposition leaders meetings in Islamabad.

Following Hekmatyar's announcement in a press conference here on Tuesday that Afghanistan will win time, the political analysts term the Simons-Hekmatyar meeting as most significant.

Hekmatyar also called on Pakistani President Farooq Leghari on Wednesday afternoon. Leghari expressed that Pakistan wants to see an early and political solution of the conflict.

Meanwhile, some newspapers here Wednesday termed the Afghan opposition leaders about a week-long deliberations, in the way of getting a permanent solution to the Afghan conflict, a failure.

Pakistan: Leghari Urges Hekmatyar To Resolve Afghan Crisis

BK1502074896 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 15 Feb 96 pp 1, 9

[Report by Tariq Butt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad: President Farooq Leghari has urged Hezb-e-Eslami Chief Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar and other Afghan leaders to extricate Afghanistan from the dangerous situation it is in.

Hekmatyar called on the President Wednesday. "The recent interaction between the Afghan leaders will help resolve the Afghan problem on a just and equitable basis with due regard to Afghanistan's unity and territorial integrity," Leghari hoped.

Meanwhile, US ambassador in Pakistan Thomas Simmons had a meeting with Hekmatyar to discuss the Afghan situation.

The Afghan leader left for Peshawar in the evening to attend the executive council meeting of his party. He is scheduled to leave for Afghanistan Thursday.

In the meantime, an informed official told The News that Russia has started giving $25 million to the Rabbani government every month, which shows the revival of Moscow's strategic interest in Afghanistan.

"Russia and India see their interest better served with an unstable Afghanistan," the official said. "Both want to obstruct a possible access of Pakistan to Central Asia. Instability in Afghanistan helps Moscow promote its regional and international designs."

The official said Pakistan would like to see peace return to Afghanistan as soon as possible, and rejected Rabbani government's assertion that the recent Afghan talks were hosted by Pakistan.

"Moscow's argument that they will provide aid to Kabul regardless of the fact who is ruling is not plausible, "the official said. He disagreed with the view that Uzbek warlord General 'Abdol Rasheed Dostam was given a special treatment in Islamabad as he met the President and the Chief of the Army Staff. "Other Afghan leaders have always been received with equal warmth. Hekmatyar also met Leghari".

About the recently-concluded talks among Afghan leaders here, the official said what was encouraging was that they have shown more flexibility than before. He referred to a statement of Hekmatyar in which the Afghan leader said he was ready to sit down with Rabbani even as President. The official pointed out that this is a different position from Hekmatyar's earlier stance that Rabbani should first resign.

To a question that UN special envoy Mehmoud Mestiri's mission is nowhere in sight, the official said the UN diplomat was "disturbed" over the fact that war may break out in Afghanistan again.

But the official himself believed that chances of fresh war were low. To a question, he said what Afghans will now finally conclude will be different from the Islamabad and Peshawar accords in which some Afghan parties did not participate.

President Leghari told Hekmatyar that Pakistan desires brotherly relations with Afghanistan on the basis of mutual respect, sovereignty and equality. He reaffirmed Pakistan's policy of non- interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan and supported the UN peace process in further national reconciliation in that country on the basis of ground realities.

Hekmatyar briefed the President on political and military situation in Afghanistan and described the session of talks among the leaders of the component parties of the Supreme Coordination Council at Islamabad as constructive and fruitful.

He said all the Afghan opposition parties want Rabbani to step down and transfer power to an interim setup to pave the way for free and fair elections.

Meanwhile, the Ettehad-e-Eslami chief, Prof. 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf told the Voice of America that the problems of his country could not be resolved unless all the Afghan organizations and forces held talks jointly.

Commenting on the meetings of the Supreme Coordination Council and other Afghan leaders in Islamabad, he said no decision being made in such talks could resolve all the problems of Afghanistan.

He suggested that all Afghan leaders should hold talks in Kabul and also negotiate with the government. "The atmosphere is now conducive for holding such parleys."

According to an AFP report from Kabul, the Rabbani government Wednesday dismissed the outcome of the Islamabad talks.

"I do not see anything new or significant in these declarations from Islamabad," said defense ministry spokesman Dr Abdullah, one of the most powerful figures in the government.

Abdullah and other Kabul administration figures, however, down- played the opposition proposals. "We have always said that we are ready to talk to any group, including the Taleban, to end the fighting, sponsoring fresh talks is not new idea, "a senior defense official said.

"But we reject the notion of holding talks in Islamabad as Pakistan has always aimed at sabotaging peace efforts sponsored by Afghan groups themselves. We have always maintained that any talks about Afghanistan being held in Pakistan would be fundamentally fruitless," the official said.

Meanwhile, a convoy of 18 UN trucks left Pakistan for the beleaguered Kabul Wednesday carrying tons of much-needed food supplies, UN officials said. The trucks were to travel along a key transit route between eastern Afghan city of Jalalabad and capital Kabul.

Pakistan: President Receives Afghan Faction Leader Hekmatyar

BK1402145396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN special envoy, Mr. Mahmoud Mestiri, has been holding intensive negotiations with Afghan leaders in Islamabad and Afghanistan. In Islamabad, the frontline leadership of different parties of Afghanistan opposed to the Kabul regime of Professor Borhanoddin Rabbani agreed on a five-point agenda for a peaceful settlement of the Afghan crisis. The agenda includes, besides other documents, immediate resignation of Prof. Borhanoddin Rabbani from the presidency, transfer of power to a broad-based government, demilitarization of Kabul, and elections for a new leadership. Most of the Afghan leaders, including Jonbesh-e Melli leader General Rashid Dostam, left for Afghanistan for further negotiations.

The leader of Hezb-e Eslami, Engineer Golboddin Hekmatyar, who is in Islamabad, continues to hold talks with top Pakistani leaders on solving the Afghan issue peacefully. Mr. Golboddin Hekmatyar called on the president at the Aiwan-i-Sadar [President House] today and discussed the political and military situation prevailing in Afghanistan. Talking to the Afghan leader, the president expressed the hope that the recent interaction between the Afghan leaders would help in resolving the Afghan problem on a just and equitable basis with due regard to Afghanistan's unity and territorial integrity so that the people of Afghanistan could resume their important role in the comity of nations. The president reiterated Pakistan's desire for brotherly relations with Afghanistan on the basis of mutual respect and sovereign equality, reaffirming Pakistan's policy of noninterference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The president also expressed support for the UN peace process in furthering national reconciliation in Afghanistan on the basis of immutable ground realities.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Meets With UN Secretary General

BK1502084796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] UN Secretary General Butrus-Ghali has proposed the convening of an international conference to restore peace and security in Afghanistan. During a meeting with [Pakistan's] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali at UN Headquarters in New York, he exchanged views on various regional issues, including Kashmir. Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali emphasized establishing a controlling council [previous two words in English] in Afghanistan on the basis of ethnic realities. He also stressed the need to demilitarize Afghanistan immediately. He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the efforts of the UN secretary general's special representative to restore peace in Afghanistan. The foreign minister told Butrus-Ghali that Pakistan will continue to help Afghanistan on humanitarian grounds. In this context, he referred to Pakistan's assistance to the International Committee of Red Cross in airlifting food items to Kabul from Peshawar.

The foreign minister briefed Butrus-Ghali on the Indian repression in Kashmir and recent violations of the Line of Control. He also referred to the dangers posed to the security situation in South Asia by India's plan to carry out a second nuclear test and its production of the Prithvi missile.

The foreign minister supported the secretary general's proposal for stand-by [previous word in English] arrangements and offered to provide two brigades for peacekeeping efforts. A memorandum of understanding will be signed shortly with the UN Secretariat for this purpose.

Pakistan: Foreign Secretary To Visit Iran To Promote Afghan Peace

BK1502120696 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The foreign secretary, Mr. Najmuddin Sheikh, is paying a two-day visit to Iran from Saturday [17 February] in a bid to continue efforts to promote peace in Afghanistan. A Foreign Office spokesman said in Islamabad that both Islamabad and Tehran have been in constant touch on Afghan issue and pointed out that the Iranian deputy foreign minister was in the capital last week. He said Pakistani and Iranian efforts can only be successful in counseling the Afghans, who alone can determine what plan is acceptable to them. Answering a question, the spokesman ruled out any possibility of a meeting of the foreign secretary with a representative of Kabul regime in Tehran. He said the foreign secretary will only meet Iranian authorities to discuss Afghan issue.

Pakistan: Bhutto Lauds Sharif's Statement on Nuclear Issue

BK1402163596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said the only solution of the Kashmir dispute acceptable to Pakistan would be solution based on granting the right of self-determination to Kashmiri people. Addressing an Iftar [Ramadan fast-breaking] dinner in honor of intellectuals and newsmen in Islamabad today, she said the sacrifices being rendered by the Kashmiris are going to culminate in success. She made it clear that the Indian farce of holding elections in occupied Kashmir will never be able to damage the freedom struggle.

The prime minister welcomed the statement of the opposition leader, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, at the international conference on Nuclear Nonproliferation in Washington. She described the statement of the leader of the opposition as significant reflecting Pakistan's peaceful atomic policy. She reiterated the government's offer to the opposition to initiate dialogue because, we are interested to solve a number of constitutional issues through talks. Explaining Pakistan's point of view over the atomic issue, she said we have put forward a number of proposals to India and the world at large. These proposals are aimed at declaring South Asia weapon free. She expressed Pakistan's readiness to have consensus with India over this issue.

Referring to her recent visit to Saudi Arabia, the prime minister said they discussed matters of mutual interest and world issues with Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-Abd-al-'Aziz. The prime minister said she had briefed the Saudi crown prince on the situation in South Asia due to test firing and deployment of missiles by India. She said the Indian missiles were not only a threat for Pakistan, but they also go beyond Pakistan's borders.

Commenting on the recently concluded intra-Afghan dialogue in Islamabad, Benazir Bhutto said some key Afghan leaders have themselves created an opportunity to talk among themselves on the Afghan issue with a view to resolve it peacefully. She said Pakistan wants that there must be an interim broad-based government in Afghanistan and this can be achieved only through talks among various Afghan factions.

Pakistan: Spokesman Welcomes Sharif Remarks on Nuclear Issue

BK1402143996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has again reiterated its stand on the nuclear issue that there should not be a discriminatory approach toward nonproliferation as it would be misguided and counterproductive. An official spokesman said in Islamabad today that the leader of the opposition, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif, reiterated Pakistan's stand on the issue, emphasizing that a peaceful and just solution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN resolutions was important for achieving nonproliferation goals in South Asia.

The spokesman welcomed the remarks of the opposition leader, which were made by him in his speech at an international conference held in Washington on South Asia's nuclear future.

Pakistan: Editorial Calls Sharif's U.S. Remarks 'Surprisingly Cool'

BK1502102396 Islamabad THE NATION in English 15 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Nawaz Turns a New Leaf"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In sharp variance with the strident rhetoric that normally emanates from Mian Nawaz Sharif when dilating on issues of national importance before a home audience, in his speech in a conference on non-proliferation in Washington he took a surprisingly cool, bipartisan approach on arguably the single greatest threat to Pakistan's security: India's nuclear, missile and conventional build-up. He contrasted the progress towards durable peace globally with the worsening prospects in the Gulf and South Asian regions. He eloquently argued Pakistan's case for a sufficient nuclear deterrent in the face of India's flying in the face of international opinion by threatening to explode another nuclear device while developing and deploying missile based delivery systems which bring all of Pakistan's vital targets within reach.

He reiterated Pakistan's position that we could not be expected to sign the NPT [Nonproliferation Treaty] and CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] unilaterally unless India does so. In the absence of Indian willingness to sign these treaties, which has been manifested of late in the Geneva deliberations of banning all nuclear tests by India linking such signing with global nuclear disarmament, an interim regional arrangement could be put in place which would take the shape of both Pakistan and India freezing their nuclear programmes (Pakistan has already done so), signing the NPT, CTBT, and the Fissile Materials Cut-off Convention, and accounting for existing fissile stocks.

Nawaz Sharif warned against the dangerous situation which would bring South Asia to the brink of a disastrous nuclear war were India to go ahead and test another device. He also roundly criticised the regime of discriminatory pressures and penalties on Pakistan which had clearly proved counter-productive in the absence of similar sanctions against India, which after all was the initiator of the nuclear arms race in South Asia when it exploded a nuclear device in 1974, and which is currently responsible for the escalation of tensions which betray its hegemonist ambitions.

Peace in South Asia may be difficult to achieve, the Leader of the Opposition stated, unless a peaceful and just solution to the Kashmir problem, based on the UN Resolutions which provide for the right of self-determination for the Kahmiris, were to be made a reality. He described such a solution as perhaps the most important step towards the objectives of non-proliferation in South Asia. Finally Nawaz Sharif saw a partnership between Pakistan and the US playing a very vital role in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Although the pragmatic tone of Mian Nawaz Sharif's remarks will help to assuage the fears of his critics in the US foreign policy establishment who perceive him as a "fundamentalist, hawkish on the nuclear issue", it may fall foul on his own past gung-ho rhetoric on the nuclear capability of Pakistan (We have the bomb, he had declared in a fit of emotion at a public rally in Azad Kashmir), at least as far as his own domestic political support is concerned. To that extent the Leader of the Opposition may well find that he is a prisoner of his own past.

How far he has the courage to recognise the need and wisdom to tone down the somewhat militant sloganeering he has on occasion had recourse to pillory the government (accusing it of betraying the national cause by freezing the nuclear programme, etc), will determine if he has turned the corner from mere rabble rousing to present himself as a moderate former Prime Minister and current Leader of the Opposition to the West who need reassurance that in the event that he is returned to power, their global interests will be as safe in his hands as they are in the present incumbent's. Nonetheless there is no doubt that moderation is the right course and the sensible thing to do under the circumstances, since it accords entirely with Pakistan's vital national interests. And this despite the bitter reality that even if a global or even regional regime of nuclear restraint is put in place, it will still leave intact India's considerable nuclear and conventional superiority over Pakistan.

Pakistan: Bhutto—India Not Responding to NPT Proposals

BK1502093196 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 15 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Raja Zulfikar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said on Wednesday that Pakistan wanted to reach an understanding with India on nuclear and missile proliferation issues but so far New Delhi had not responded positively.

"There hasn't been a single positive gesture by India on this issue," the prime minister deplored as she held a brief question-answer session at her official residence where she had invited journalists for an iftar dinner.

Commenting on Nawaz Sharif's speech in Washington, she said it was "sober, modest and in accordance with the Pakistani interests." Although appreciative of the speech, she said the leader of the opposition had only repeated Pakistan's official stand.

Benazir Bhutto hailed Nawaz Sharif's statement that there wouldn't be any anti-government movement after 'Id and said she wanted good working relationship with the opposition as there were certain important constitutional issues to be settled. Benazir informally spoke to journalists and answered several of their queries on the economy, politics and international issues with special emphasis on non-proliferation and the recent congregation of Afghan opposition leaders in Islamabad.

She denied Pakistan had any favourite Afghan group or that the Afghan opposition leaders had gathered in Islamabad after an arrangement had been made by Islamabad. "If this were so, Afghan leaders would definitely have met me as they have met the president and the chief of army staff," she argued.

She said that unless the country's integrity was threatened, there would not be any over-reaction against India. She said if India tested a nuclear device, Pakistan would respond in an appropriate way.

The prime minister also described reports about the Chinese export of ring magnets as "possible being part of Indian disinformation" and denied them outrightly.

She said in reply to a question that the government had not received any information from the USA whether a deal had been struck with a third country on the F-16s.

She said that the technical experts of Pakistan and France were due to meet on the issue of Mirage planes and after preliminary discussions, the respective governments would step into finalise the matter.

The prime minister dismissed the impression that the Afghan opposition congregation was Pakistan sponsored.

"There has been a lot of speculation concerning the Afghan opposition leaders' meeting in Islamabad and I want to clarify that it was nothing special." She said the Afghans had several friends here and they came to Pakistan frequently.

"Let me say that Pakistan supports the UN and OIC [Organization of Islamic Conference] efforts under which there should be an interim broad-based government in Afghanistan which should restore peace, hold elections or arrange Loya Jirgas."

She dispelled the impression that Pakistan had a soft corner for some particular Afghan group. "We don't want to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan."

The prime minister said that during her meeting with Saudi Arabia's Prince' Abdallah, she apprised him of the nuclear proliferation threats prevalent in the subcontinent and that these were not confined to the subcontinent alone but could affect other lands also. She also conveyed to the prince the prayers of the people of Pakistan for the health of the ailing Saudi King. In her speech, the prime minister said the government wanted to have good relations with the press but stressed that there should be a different between facts and fiction.

Pakistan: Ali—India Poses 'Real Danger' to Security in South Asia

BK1402165196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali has said India poses a real danger to peace and security of South Asia as it is inducting weapons of mass destruction in the region. In an interview in Washington, he said Pakistan is not developing a nuclear weapons program. A propaganda is being orchestrated against Pakistan and the real problem is that enough world attention is not focussed on India. Replying to a question on stories about Pakistan developing nuclear weapons, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said these allegations were coming from internal politics of the United States. He said Pakistan has not done anything which should raise concern of the world community.

Pakistan: Daily Links Staffer's Expulsion To Nuclear Program

BK1502100096 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 15 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "A Questionable Expulsion"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A non-diplomatic staffer at Pakistan's High Commission in London has been served with a deportation notice by the British Home Office for his alleged involvement in an attempt to ship uncleared equipment to Pakistan. The expulsion notice maintains that his presence in Britain is "not conducive to the public good", and that it poses a threat to British "national security". The charge-sheet also cites his involvement in the "proliferation of weapons of mass destruction". The allegation has meanwhile been denied by a Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad. As reported by a Swedish newspaper recently, the British customs authorities had seized last year a consignment of laser devices believed to be meant for Pakistan's nuclear programme. According to an Evening Standard report, the British authorities have so far foiled three other such attempts. Meanwhile, the "scoop" has been avidly seized upon by the BBC and the VOA for inclusion in their primetime broadcasts to whip up the issue.

For one thing, the timing of the expulsion order, particularly in the backdrop of Foreign Minister Asif Ahmad Ali's Washington visit, is of special significance. Some circles have perceived in the move a possible design to unleash a fresh propaganda blitzkrieg to hinder delivery of military equipment to Islamabad, underblocked under the one time Brown waiver. Secondly, if it at all wished to acquire the devices, why should Islamabad have assigned the sensitive task to so ordinary an employee? Obviously, a person of his lowly position could not be expected to handle the assignment. Thirdly, why issue a deportation order for someone who does not enjoy diplomaic immunity? Why not order his arrest under the relevant laws? When the British Home Office spokesman was asked by the newsmen to clarify his position on the issue he had no defence to offer. Viewed from all these angles, the episode appears to be part of a renewed arm-twisting drive by the West to forestal a possible bid by Islamabad to "uncap" its nuclear programme in the face of New Delhi's determination to go ahead with its nuclear-cum missile project. Incidentally, Washington has not intiated any solid punitive action against New Delhi for its refusal to budge on the nuclear or the missile issues. Nay, it continues to transfer sophisticated technology to New Delhi despite the latter's refusal to toe the non-proliferation line. A Western stance like this will encourage New Delhi in its nuclear ambitions. Instead of resorting to such partisan tactics, the West should adopt an even-handed approach to keep the region free of nuclear weapons.

Pakistan: Overseas Conference Delegate Speaks on Nuclear Issue

BK1402154796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has called for revival of U.S. proposal for nine-nation multilateral talks on South Asian security and nonproliferation. Pakistan's ambassador, Mr. Munir Akram, told an international conference on Nuclear Nonproliferation being held in Washington that the proposed multilateral forum could serve to promote agreement on security, nonproliferation, and conventional arms control in the region. He said Pakistan is also prepared to open bilateral talks with India. These talks must seek to resolve the Kashmir dispute. He said setting aside media controversies, there is significant degree of convergence between Pakistan and the United States on the ways and means to arrest proliferation in South Asia and stabilize and improve the regional security environment. He said most importantly Pakistan and the United States agree on an early, just, and peaceful solution of the Kashmir dispute, the core issue between Pakistan and India. A Kashmir solution would facilitate agreement on conventional and nonconventional arms control in South Asia and would significantly improve the security environment and open the door to economic and commercial cooperation in the region.

Pakistan: Editorial—U.S. 'Witch-Hunt' Focused on Karachi, Beijing

BK1102100196 Islamabad THE NATION in English 11 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Punishing China and Pakistan?"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The witch hunters in the U.S. Congress, constantly on the look-out for potential preys, have now decided that China, and possibly Pakistan, are ripe for punishment. China qualifies doubly for it because it is threatening the U.S. protege, Taiwan, on the one hand and allegedly violating U.S. laws of nonproliferation on the other. Behind these witch hunters are strong pro-Taiwan and anti-China lobbies who have many sticks to beat China with. China's adherence to communism (anathema to the U.S.) though in a very diluted form, is one. Still another is its nuclear status, the only non-European nation the nuclear club. But why Pakistan? Only recently, the U.S. Congress had passed the Brown Amendment as a one-time waiver of the Pressler Law, so that Pakistan could receive some of the military hardware it had already paid for Senator Larry Pressler and a few others fought tooth and nail to block it and failed. Desperately looking for an opportunity to jump into the fray again, they have asked President Clinton to ignore the Brown Amendment and stop the delivery of the military hardware, because Pakistan had received from China "ring magnets", which are used for enrichment of uranium. And since both China and Pakistan had now violated the U.S. law, sanctions must apply to both. To make the case against China even stronger, they had added another charge of China violating the MTCR [Missile Technology Control Regime] by supplying missile technology to Iran. The basis of these allegations are some intelligence reports, said to have been prepared on the basis of satellite pictures, which showed thousands of ring magnets reaching Pakistan. Both China and Pakistan have termed the report as false. But denials by the victims of the witch-hunt are not known to have ever ended such allegations in the U.S.. These go on particularly when the whipping boys happen to be favourite targets of powerful U.S. lobbies. In the case of Pakistan, both the Indian and the Israeli lobbies have scores to settle with Pakistan.

Since those accusing Pakistan of violating some nonproliferation U.S. law, have more or less a vested interest in putting Pakistan in the dock, they do not necessarily have to follow any logic. Having already accepted the fact, for example, that Pakistan is an nuclear-capable country, and that capability having been acquired without any help China anywhere else, how come Pakistan suddenly finds itself short an important part and decides to import it from China? If such a part was needed and Pakistan had produced it on its own in the first place, why should it now go to China for it? That also begs the question as to whether the technology used by Pakistan requires thousands of ring magnets? Even more curious is the situation in which the U.S. agrees to issue a waiver in favour of Pakistan, despite sticking to the charge that Pakistan had violated a U.S. non proliferation law, and then is urged by some self-appointed moralists in the U.S. Congress to withdraw that waiver because Pakistan was again suspected of having violating the same law? it would be comic if it was not so pathetic. The anti-Pakistan lobbies working overtime in the U.S. are not even making a pretence to rationality or even simple logic or objectivity.

Pakistan: Attempt To Show Kashmir as Part of India Protested

BK1502121296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 15 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has protested to India over New Delhi's attempt to show the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir as part of India on two occasions, including the cricket world cup opening ceremony in Calcutta on Sunday last. The Indian high commissioner to Pakistan was summoned to the Foreign Office in Islamabad today and was handed over a protest note in this regard. The other occasion of such an attempt by India was the Indian Republic Day function in Islamabad on the 26th of last month, where a brochure was distributed by the Indian Embassy containing objectionable material and showing the disputed territory as part of India. The Indian high commissioner was also handed over a map issued by the United Nations showing Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed territory and a note stating that its final status has not yet been agreed upon by the parties concerned.

Pakistan: Activist—Altaf Group Plans Independent Karachi State

BK1402150796 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Mahbub Gilani, a former activist of Muhibban-i-Pakistan, a subsidiary of Altaf Group in Saudi Arabia has disclosed that Altaf Group had chalked out a plan to declare Karachi as independent state with Dr. Imran Farooq as the first prime minister. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, Mahbub Gilani made revealing disclosures about the nefarious activities of Altaf Group and said one Rauf Siddiqi, an activist of Altaf Group, launched MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] branch in Saudi Arabia with the name of Muhibban-i-Pakistan projecting it as a social organization because, political activities are prohibited in Saudi Arabia. Giving further details, he said the body was formed to generate funds from overseas Pakistanis for onward remittance to Altaf Group in Pakistan. Mahbub Gilani, who was appointed convener Jeddah branch of Muhibban-i-Pakistan, also disclosed that Altaf Hussain visited Saudi Arabia for the second time in January 1992 and told the party workers that agencies in Pakistan are conspiring against mohajirs and his life is also in danger. Mr. Gilani told newsmen as a patriotic Pakistani, he always felt disdainful of the whole activities of the subsidiary in Saudi Arabia and decided to dissociate himself from the group. He said he like other patriotic Pakistanis can never imagine any separation from Pakistan. He said we cannot imagine achieving the rights of muhajirs at the cost of Pakistan's ideology and sovereignty. Mr. Gilani called upon the Pakistanis living in Pakistan and abroad to dissociate themselves from Altaf Group as it does not believe in the territorial integrity of Pakistan.

Pakistan: Altaf Group 'Terrorist' Killed in Police Encounter

BK1402155596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 14 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Altaf Group terrorist, Qutubuddin alias Maju, was killed in an encounter with police within Nazimabad police station limits in Karachi today. He was accused of involvement in several murder cases. However, six of his accomplices managed to escape. Police also arrested nine terrorists from Orangi Extension area, and recovered weapons and ammunition in their possession. Police say that the arrested terrorists were involved in a number of crimes of murders, car lifting, robbery, arson, and snatching of money.

Pakistan: Editorial Examines Conditions of IMF Loan

BK1102132396 Karachi BUSINESS RECORDER in English 10 Feb 96 p 2

[Editorial: "The Seat of Economic Decisions"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A very interesting development came to fore the other day. A group of representatives of the various export industries reportedly called on the resident representative of International Monetary Fund Shamsuddin Tariq in Islamabad and apprised him of the difficult situation they have been placed as a result of various duties and levies which have been imposed either on raw materials or finished products of these industries by the government under the pressure of IMF's loan conditionalities. What was further intriguing in this event was that the meeting of the exporters' with the IMF's resident representative, was arranged by the federal ministry of commerce whose joint secretary Nasim Qureshi was reportedly also present in the meeting.

The news report in the BUSINESS RECORDER of Thursday last, conveyed that the IMF's resident representative gave a patient hearing to the, exporter's representatives and promise that the points raised by them in the meeting would be kept in mind.

This event, which was the first of its type for Pakistan, seemingly goes to confirm the general impression held by businessmen and economists that the real seat of economic policy decisions in this country is now firmly and decisively occupied by the IMF. And as to how deplorably the government is rendered helpless in the matter is confirmed by the federal commerce ministries initiative to have a meeting of exporters' representatives arranged with the IMF official. It appears that the government, from now onwards, would find it easier to divert most of the complaining businessmen and industrialists who are pinched by new levies, taxes and who are distracted by the premature expire official incentives and exemptions, to the IMF's resident representative in Islamabad rather than to tackle by itself the rising number of grievances of businessmen. The government having been turned helpless to the core by the urgency of stand-by credit and structural adjustment facility from the IMF seems to find no option left but to agree to comply of the IMF's conditionalities.

The situation has already created confusion in the overall economic trends particularly where the manufacturing sector is involved.

The recent hikes in production costs resulting from across-the- board imposition of regulatory duty besides the gradual withdrawal of incentives and tax exemptions, have already started hurting industrial production, and capital formation in industry has slowed down. It may be pointed out that the growth in export is unavoidably linked with the fate of the industrial sector. An indiscreet exercise of imposing levies and duties on export industries would inevitably affect export growth adversely. The exports have already developed a declining trend. On the other hand, fiscal incentives are not permissible under the IMF's structural adjustment programme. Such an imbroglio is likely to retard the country's export potential. The decline in exports would further weaken the government's position vis-a-vis the IMF. Thus the ground would be paved for total surrender to the IMF's conditionalities.

Pakistan: Editorial Views IMF's Endorsement of Economic Policies

BK1202105696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 12 Feb 96 p 7

[Editorial: "A Happy IMF"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The government must be feeling slightly relieved after the endorsement of its economic and financial policies by the International Monetary Fund [IMF] team. The officials came to Pakistan for the first review of the $600 million standby credit arrangement agreed to in December. This has instantly facilitated the release of the second tranche of the credit, equivalent to $80 million. The first tranche of the credit of $200 million was released immediately after the signing the agreement. These tranches are helping the government to maintain the country's foreign exchange reserves at a respectable level — the equivalent of six weeks' imports. This is still short of the target of nine weeks' imports, to be achieved at a sustainable level by the end of the year, and that, too, when the government's debt- servicing liabilities would have otherwise brought the reserves in the red.

Successful implementation of the economic and financial programme that the government has promised to pursue under the standby credit arrangement could lead to a new Extended Structural Adjustment Facility (ESAF) deal for a medium-term credit arrangement. The IMF indicated that Pakistan's graduation from the standby agreement to ESAF was possible through the implementation of the former arrangement. This is of a temporary nature with a 15-month range, while ESAF will be for a three-year period. Entering into a new ESAF arrangement will also save the country from the loss of face which it suffered when the old $1.2 billion three year ESAF arrangement with Pakistan was canceled by the IMF after the first year. This was due to Pakistan's failure to fulfill its commitments in the budget of the current financial year, particularly regarding tariff reduction and improvement in a budgetary deficit situation. The new ESAF credit arrangement could also help to further improve the reserve position.

But all this at what cost? The leader of the IMF team gave all- out support to the government's economic and financial programmes which could enhance the growth rate of the economy, reduce inflation and increase international reserves. These are all economics which seem to have little relevance to the life of the common person, as the prices of goods and services continue to increase, with little or no increase in their income. One such programme is the mobilisation of resources through various means including extension of sales tax to the retail level. Without measures for protection of consumers' interests, which are totally absent in Pakistan, this could play havoc with people's spending, as all taxes will be transferred to consumers through arbitrary increase in prices.

Neither the government nor the IMF, perhaps, gave any thought to the political fallout of this situation. But they should if the economy is to be kept on track, for which it needs the people's support. Neither the government nor the IMF can work for the economy in isolation.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE Claims Troops Killed Civilians

BK1402141896 (Internet) Tamil Eelam News WWW in Tamil 12 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Tamil village of Kumarapuram, 25 km south of Thirumalai, came under the brutal attack of Sri Lankan military and homeguards. The above terrorist gang entered Kumarapuram village with guns, knives, and axes and carried out its brutal genocide of Tamils by shooting, stabbing, and axing them.

According to reports available so far, there are 24 bodies in Mutur hospital. Of these, 11 are understood to be of women and children. Twenty-eight more people have been admitted to Trincomalee hospital with grievous injuries. The Sinhalese Army also shot those who stayed indoors. Those who ran for their lives across the paddy fields were also chased and shot at. The Sri Lankan Army went door to door for about two hours perpetrating this horror.

Southern Tamil Eelam witnessed another carnage 14 days after protest rallies and meetings were held to commemorate the Kokkadichcholai massacre of 28 January 1987.

The politics of violence and of state-sponsored terrorism have been given a decent burial. A medicine of understanding and love has been applied to the festering wound of ethnic conflict — so said President Chandrika Kumaratunga. Seven days after Chandrika Kumaratunga's speech on independence day on 4 Feb, state-sponsored terrorism against the Tamil people again displayed its barbarity.

It is common knowledge to all that the antinational gang, the People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam [PLOTE], has been collecting extortion money at Kandacholai from trucks transporting essential goods from Vavuniya to the North. Although efforts have been made by different quarters to prevent this, the PLOTE group has refused to refrain from it.

It is learned that the government has announced a new strategy to provide aid to affected people. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Rehabilitation has announced that a person who applies for this aid should have a village officer or assistant government agent certify that he did not indulge in hostilities against the government or government troops.

The thirst of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] is the motherland of Tamil Eelam.

Sri Lanka: Ministry Issues Statement on Alleged Massacre

BK1502054396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 15 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A very senior army officer Major General E.H. Samaratunga, VSP [expansion unknown] has been appointed as President of a Court of Inquiry to investigate and report about the massacre of innocent and unarmed civilians including women and children at Kumarapuram village north of Kiliveddi by an unknown group of armed persons on the night of February 11, 1996, the Defence Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday.

The statement said if military personnel were found to be involved in the incident action would be taken to charge them according to the laws applicable to every citizen of Sri Lanka.

"The government of Sri Lanka will under no circumstances condone any indisciplined behaviour on the part of its armed forces," the statement said.

The following is the text of the Defence Ministry statement:

"We express our deep shock and concern over the massacre of innocent and unarmed civilians including women and children at Kumarapuram village by an unknown group of armed persons on the night of 11 February, 1996. Our deepest and heartfelt sympathies are extended to the bereaved families of the innocent victims of this unprovoked and inhuman massacre.

At present police investigations are in progress and eye-witness accounts suggest the possibility of military personnel being involved. Some military personnel who have been suspected of involvement have already been placed under military custody.

If military personnel are found to be involved in this incident action will be taken to charge them according to the laws applicable to every citizen of Sri Lanka.

A very senior army officer, Major General E.H. Samaratunga, VSP has been appointed as President of a Court of Inquiry to investigate and report on this incident. The most severe disciplinary action will be taken against any military personnel found to be involved in the said incident.

The government of Sri Lanka will under no circumstances condone any indisciplined behaviour on the part of its Armed Forces."

Sri Lanka: Government Destroys Tiger 'Flotilla'; Clash Reported

BK1502052896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 15 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Navy and Air Force in a combined dawn attack on Wednesday [14 February] destroyed a Tiger vessel carrying a huge quantity of explosives and arms and also a flotilla of boats escorting it, off the Allampil-Kokkuthudavai coast between Trincomalee and Mullaitivu in Eastern Sri Lanka, our Trincomalee district correspondent and other official sources said.

A news release from the Ministry of Defence said "In the early hours of yesterday, a ship suspected to be carrying armaments for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam was sighted off the Eastern coast. The Sri Lanka Navy and the SLAF [Sri Lankan Air Force] carrying out surveillance of the ship were fired at when attempting to investigate. At this point, it was noted that few small boats approached the ship and that some cargo was off loaded from the ship to the boats. Shortly thereafter, the navy and the airforce took action to destroy the ship after giving due warning. A secondary explosion was also observed during this action. The Airforce took further action to destroy the small boats".

Following the aerial and naval attack, huge flames swirled up from the base of the vessel quickly followed by thunderous and reverberating sounds of explosives being ignited.

The Navy and Air Force had been alerted to the presence of a Tiger vessel in Sri Lankan territorial waters following reports of sighting a mysterious vessel off Puttalam, Iranawila and later Yala wild life sanctuary during the last few days. An Air Force plane spotted the vessel several miles off the Mullaitivu coast on Tuesday morning and both the Navy and Air Force had it under close surveillance since then.

The Navy had first ringed the area of enemy activity and later closed in for the assault with air support just when the ship's cargo was being transferred to the boats.

"As the Navy gunboats swung into action, eight fighter planes pounded the ship causing it to burst into flames," a military spokesman in Colombo said.

The spokesman said the Navy had first asked the ship's crew to surrender, but they (the Tiger crew) had begun firing at the Navy boats, and later the fighter planes had joined the battle. He did not rule out the possibility that the Sea Tigers manning the ship themselves could have set fire to it to prevent at least a part of the cargo falling into the hands of the Navy.

The burning vessel was reportedly drifting towards the coast later in the day. The security authorities did not know for sure where the vessel with the lethal cargo originated.

In a separate incident, three elite Special Task Force commandos were killed and four others injured Wednesday morning during a confrontation with a group of Tigers in Pullumalai, eight km north of Mahaoya. Tiger casualties were not immediately available.

Meanwhile, Police are investigating reports of a mysterious explosion heard by coastal residents from the direction of the mid-sea off Negombo (on the Western coastal belt) on Wednesday evening.

Police said the sound of the explosion rattled several buildings and structures in Negombo, which was placed under a heightened security alert.

The Navy coast guard assisted by Air Force helicopters stepped up marine surveillance soon after the incident.

Sri Lanka: Colombo Security Increased; Schools Closed

BK1502052596 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 15 Feb 96

[Received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Security in Colombo has been beefed up with immediate effect by deploying more troops to help the police, official sources said Wednesday.

A section of the Sinha Regiment of the Army has already been deployed to assist the police, military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe said. He said additional troops have been deployed to help the police at the request of IGP [Inspector General of Police] W.B. Rajaguru after the Central Bank bomb blast.

Sometime back, the government appointed an Operations Commander of Colombo from the army to coordinate security measures in Colombo with the police. This unit, set up under the command of Major General Gemunu Kulatunga, is still operational. Major General Jaliya Nammuni is acting as the chief of this unit until Maj. Gen. Kulatunga returns from a visit abroad.

Meanwhile, the government has decided to close all schools in the island with effect from Thursday, a communique issued by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education said.

It said officials of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Ministry of Defence would discuss with the provincial authorities, the question of reopening of schools in due course. The secretaries of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education and Defence would jointly coordinate in the matter.

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